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AN

ESSAY

ON THE

GENIUS

AND

WRITINGS

OF

POPE.

The THIRD EDITION, Corrected.

> Satyra quidem tota noſtra eſt: in qua primus inſignem laudem adeptus eſt Lucilius; qui quoſdam ita deditos ſibi adhuc habet amatores, ut eum, non ejuſdem modo operis autoribus, ſed omnibus poetis, præferre non dubitent.
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TO

THE REVEREND

Dr. YOUNG,

RECTOR

Of WELWYN in HERTFORDSHIRE.

DEAR SIR,

PERMIT me to break into your retirement, the reſidence of virtue and literature, and to trouble you with a few reflections on the merits and real character of an admired author, and on other collateral ſubjects of criticiſm, that will naturally ariſe in the courſe of ſuch an enquiry. No love of ſingularity, no affectation of paradoxical opinions, gave riſe to the following work.

I revere the memory of Pope, I reſpect and honour his abilities; but I do not think him at the head of his profeſſion. In other words, in that ſpecies of poetry wherein Pope excelled, he is ſuperior to all mankind: and I only ſay, that this ſpecies of poetry is not the moſt excellent one of the art.

We do not, it ſhould ſeem ſufficiently attend to the difference there is, betwixt a Man of Wit, a Man of Sense, and a True Poet. Donne and Swift were undoubtedly men of wit, and men of ſenſe: but what traces have they left of pure poetry? It is remarkable, that Dryden ſays of Donne; He was the greateſt wit, tho' not the greateſt poet of this nation. Fontenelle and La Motte are entitled to the former character; but what can they urge to gain the latter? Which of theſe characters is the moſt valuable and uſeful, is entirely out of the queſtion: all I plead for, is, to have their ſeveral provinces kept diſtinct from each other; and to impreſs on the reader, that a clear head, and acute underſtanding are not ſufficient, alone, to make a POET; that the moſt ſolid obſervations on human life, expreſſed with the utmoſt elegance and brevity, are MORALITY, and not POETRY; that the EPISTLES of Boileau in RHYME, are no more poetical, than the CHARACTERS of La Bruyere in PROSE; and that it is a creative and glowing IMAGINATION, "acer ſpiritus ac vis," and that alone, that can ſtamp a writer with this exalted and very uncommon character, which ſo few poſſeſs, and of which ſo few can properly judge.

For one perſon who can adequately reliſh, and enjoy a work of imagination, twenty are to be found who can taſte and judge of, obſervations on familiar life, and the manners of the age. The ſatires of Arioſto are more read than the Orlando Furioſo, or even Dante. Are there ſo many cordial admirers of Spenſer and Milton, as of Hudibras; if we ſtrike out of the number of theſe ſuppoſed admirers, thoſe who appear ſuch out of faſhion, and not of feeling?

Swift's rhapſody on poetry is far more popular than Akenſide's noble ode to lord Huntingdon. The epistles on the Characters of men and women, and your ſprightly ſatires, my good friend, are more frequently peruſed, and quoted, than L'Allegro and Il

Penſeroſo of Milton. Had you written only theſe ſatires, you would indeed have gained the title of a man of wit, and a man of ſenſe; but, I am confident, would not inſiſt on being denominated a POET, MERELY on their account.

NON SATIS EST PURIS VERSUM PERSCRIBERE VERBIS.

IT is amazing this matter ſhould ever have been miſtaken, when Horace has taken particular and repeated pains, to ſettle and adjuſt the opinion in queſtion. He has more than once diſclaimed all right and title to the name of POET, on the ſcore of his ethic and ſatiric pieces.

——NEQUE ENIM CONCLUDERE VERSUM
DIXERIS ESSE SATIS——

are lines, often repeated, but whoſe meaning is not extended and weighed as it ought to be. Nothing can be more

judicious than the method he preſcribes, of trying whether any compoſition be eſſentially poetical or not; which is, to drop entirely the meaſures and numbers, and tranſpoſe and invert the order of the words: and in this unadorned manner to peruſe the paſſage. If there be really in it a true poetical ſpirit, all your inverſions and tranſpoſitions will not diſguiſe and extinguiſh it; but it will retain its luſtre, like a diamond, unſet, and thrown back into the rubbiſh of the mine. Let us make a little experiment on the following well-known lines; "*Yes, you deſpiſe*
"*the man that is confined to books,*
"*who rails at human kind from his*
"*ſtudy; tho' what he learns, he ſpeaks;*
"*and may perhaps advance ſome gene-*
"*ral maxims, or may be right by*
"*chance.*

“ *chance. The coxcomb bird, ſo grave*
“ *and ſo talkative, that cries whore,*
“ *knave, and cuckold, from his cage,*
“ *tho' he rightly call many a paſſenger,*
“ *you hold him no philoſopher. And yet,*
“ *ſuch is the fate of all extremes, men*
“ *may be read too much, as well as*
“ *books. We grow more partial, for the*
“ *ſake of the obſerver, to obſervations*
“ *which we ourſelves make; leſs ſo to*
“ *written wiſdom, becauſe another's.*
“ *Maxims are drawn from notions,*
“ *and thoſe from gueſs.*” What ſhall we ſay of this paſſage?---Why, that it is moſt excellent ſenſe, but juſt as poetical as the “ Qui fit Mæcenas” of the author who recommends this method of trial. Take ten lines of the Iliad, Paradiſe Loſt, or even of the Georgics of Virgil, and ſee whether by any

any proceſs of critical chymiſtry, you can lower and reduce them to the tameneſs of proſe. You will find that they will appear like Ulyſſes in his diſguiſe of rags, ſtill a hero, tho' lodged in the cottage of the herdſman Eumæus.

The Sublime and the Pathetic are the two chief nerves of all genuine poeſy. What is there tranſcendently Sublime or Pathetic in Pope? In his works there is indeed, "nihil inane, "nihil arceſſitum;---puro tamen fonti "quam magno flumini proprior;" as the excellent Quintilian remarks of Lyſias. And becauſe I am perhaps unwilling to ſpeak out in plain Engliſh, I will adopt the following paſſage of Voltaire, which, in my opinion, as exactly characterizes Pope as it does his model Boileau, for whom it was originally deſigned. " INCAPABLE PEUT-ETRE DU SUBLIME QUI ELEVE L'AME, ET DU SENTIMENT QUI L'ATTENDRIT, MAIS FAIT POUR ECLAIRER CEUX A QUI LA NATURE ACCORDA L'UN ET L'AUTRE, LABORIEUX, SEVERE, PRECIS, PUR, HARMONIEUX, IL DEVINT, ENFIN, LE POETE DE LA RAISON."

Our Engliſh poets may, I think, be diſpoſed in four different claſſes and degrees. In the firſt claſs, I would place, our only three ſublime and pathetic poets; Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton. In the ſecond claſs ſhould be ranked, ſuch as poſſeſſed the true poetical genius, in a more moderate degree, but who had noble talents for moral, ethical, and panegyrical poeſy.

At the head of theſe are DRYDEN, PRIOR, ADDISON, COWLEY, WALLER, GARTH, FENTON, GAY, DENHAM, PARNELL. In the third Claſs may be placed, men of wit, of elegant taſte, and lively fancy in deſcribing familiar life, tho' not the higher ſcenes of poetry. Here may be numbered, BUTLER, SWIFT, ROCHESTER, DONNE, DORSET, OLDHAM. In the fourth claſs, the mere verſifiers, however ſmooth and mellifluous ſome of them may be thought, ſhould be diſpoſed. Such as PITT, SANDYS, FAIRFAX, BROOME, BUCKINGHAM, LANSDOWN. This enumeration is not intended as a complete catalogue of writers, and in their proper order, but only to mark out briefly the different ſpecies of our celebrated authors

thors. In which of theſe claſſes POPE deſerves to be placed, the following work is intended to determine.

I am, DEAR SIR,

Your affectionate

1756.

And faithful ſervant.

Advertiſement.

WHENEVER a quotation is made in the French language, throughout the following remarks, the author deſires to be underſtood, that he is far from thinking the uſe of that language any particular decoration to his ſtyle; he only uſes French words, when the force and meaning of the paſſages ſo quoted depend on the peculiar turn and idiom of the original.

AN

ESSAY

ON THE

GENIUS and WRITINGS

OF

POPE.

SECT. I.

Of the PASTORALS, *and the* MESSIAH *an Eclogue.*

PRINCES and Authors are ſeldom ſpoken of, during their lives, with juſtice and impartiality. Admiration and envy, their conſtant attendants, like two unſkilful artiſts, are apt to overcharge their pieces with too great a quantity of light or of ſhade; and are diſqualified happily to hit upon that middle colour, that mixture of error and excellence, which alone renders every repreſentation of man juſt and natural. This perhaps may be one reaſon, among others, why we have never yet ſeen a fair and candid criticiſm on the character and merits of our laſt great poet, Mr. POPE. I have therefore thought, that it would be no unpleaſing amuſement, or uninſtructive employment to examine at large, without blind panegyric, or petulant invective, the writings of this Engliſh Claſſic, in the order in which they are arranged in the elegant edition of Dr. Warburton. As I ſhall neither cenſure nor commend, without alleging the reaſon on which my opinion is founded, I ſhall be entirely unmoved at the imputation of malignity, or the clamours of popular prejudice.

IT is ſomewhat ſtrange, that in the paſtorals of a young poet there ſhould not be found a ſingle rural image that is new: but this, I am afraid, is the caſe in the PASTORALS before us. The ideas of Theocritus, Virgil,

gil, and Spenſer, are indeed here exhibited in language equally mellifluous and pure; but the deſcriptions and ſentiments are trite and common.

THAT the deſign of paſtoral poeſy is, to repreſent the undiſturbed felicity of the golden age, is an empty notion, which, though ſupported by a Rapin and a Fontenelle, I think, all rational critics have agreed to extirpate and explode. But I do not remember, that even theſe, or any critics have remarked the circumſtance that gave origin to the opinion, that any golden age was intended. Theocritus, the father and the model of this enchanting ſpecies of compoſition, lived and wrote in Sicily. The climate of Sicily was delicious, and the face of the country various, and beautiful: it's vallies and it's precipices, it's grottos and caſcades were SWEETLY INTERCHANGED, and it's flowers and fruits were laviſh and luſcious. The poet deſcribed what he ſaw and felt: and had no need to have recourſe to thoſe artificial

aſſemblages

aſſemblages of pleaſing objects, which are not to be found in nature. The figs and the honey, which he aſſigns * as a reward to a victorious ſhepherd, were in themſelves exquiſite, and are therefore aſſigned with great propriety: and the beauties of that luxurious landſcape ſo richly and circumſtantially delineated in the cloſe of the ſeventh idyllium, where all things ſmelt of ſummer and ſmelt of autumn,

Παντ' ὤσδεν θερεος μαλα πιονος, ὤσδε δ' ὀπωρης †,

were preſent and real. Succeeding writers ſuppoſing theſe beauties too great and abundant to be real, referred them to the fictitious and imaginary ſcenes of a golden age.

A MIXTURE of Britiſh and Grecian ideas may juſtly be deemed a blemiſh in the PASTORALS of POPE: and propriety is certainly violated, when he couples Pactolus with Thames, and Windſor with Hybla. Complaints of immoderate heat, and wiſhes to be conveyed to cooling caverns, when uttered

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* Idyll. i. ver. 146.

† Ver. 133.

by the inhabitants of Greece, have a decorum and conſiſtency, which they totally loſe in the character of a Britiſh ſhepherd: and Theocritus, during the ardors of Sirius, muſt have heard the murmurings of a brook, and the whiſpers of a pine *, with more homefelt pleaſure, than POPE † could poſſibly experience upon the ſame occaſion. We can never completely reliſh, or adequately underſtand any author, eſpecially any Ancient, except we conſtantly keep in our eye his climate, his country, and his age. POPE himſelf informs us, in a note, that he judiciouſly omitted the following verſe,

> And liſt'ning wolves grow milder as they hear ‡

on account of the abſurdity, which Spenſer overlooked, of introducing wolves into England. But on this principle, which is certainly a juſt one, may it not be aſked, why he ſhould ſpeak, the ſcene lying in Windſor-

---

* Idyll. i. ver. 1. † Paſt. iv. ver. 1. ‡ Paſt. ii.

Foreſt, of the SULTRY SIRIUS[*], of the GRATEFUL CLUSTERS *of grapes*[†], of a *pipe of reeds*[‡], the antique fiſtula, of *thanking Ceres for a plentiful harveſt*[§], of *the ſacrifice of lambs*[||], with many other inſtances that might be adduced to this purpoſe. That POPE however was ſenſible of the importance of adapting images to the ſcene of action, is obvious from the following example of his judgment; for in tranſlating,

> Audiit EUROTAS, juſſitque ediſcere LAUROS.

he has dexterouſly dropt the *laurels* appropriated to Eurotas, as he is ſpeaking of the river Thames, and has rendered it,

> Thames heard the numbers, as he flow'd along,
> And bade his *willows* learn the moving ſong[§§].

IN the paſſages which POPE has imitated from Theocritus, and from his Latin tranſlator Virgil, he has merited but little applauſe. It may not be unentertaining to ſee how coldly and unpoetically POPE has copied the ſubſequent appeal to the nymphs on the death of Daphnis, in compariſon of Milton on LYCIDAS, one of his juvenile pieces.

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[*] Paſt. ii. ver. 21. [†] Paſt. iii. ver. 24. [‡] Paſt. ii. ver. 41.
[§] Ibid. ver. 65. [||] Paſt. iv. ver. 81. [§§] Ibid. ver. 14.

Πα ποκ' ἀρ ἠσθ' ὁκα Δαφνις ἐτακετο; πα ποκα, Νυμφαι;
Η καλα Πηνειω καλα τεμπεα, η κατα Πινδω;
Ου γαρ δη ποταμοιο μεγα ῥοον ειχετ' Ανάπω,
Ουδ' Αιτνας σκοπιαν, 'ὐδ' Ακιδος ἱερον ὑδωρ *.

Where ſtray ye, Muſes, in what lawn or grove,
While your Alexis pines in hopeleſs love?
In thoſe fair fields where ſacred Iſis glides,
Or elſe where Cam his winding vales divides †.

Where were ye, nymphs, when the remorſeleſs deep
Clos'd o'er the head of your lov'd Lycidas?
For neither were ye playing on the ſteep
Where your old bards, the famous Druids lie;
Nor on the ſhaggy top of Mona high,
Nor yet where Deva ſpreads her wizard ſtream ‡.

THE mention of places remarkably romantic, the ſuppoſed habitation of Druids, bards, and wizards, is far more pleaſing to the imagination, than the obvious introduction of Cam and Iſis, as ſeats of the Muſes.

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* THEOCRITUS, Idyll. i. 66. † POPE, Paſt. ii. 24. ‡ MILTON.

A SHEPHERD in Theocritus wiſhes with much tenderneſs and elegance, both which muſt ſuffer in a literal tranſlation, "Would "I could become a murmuring bee, fly into "your grotto, and be permitted to creep a-"mong the leaves of ivy and fern that com-"poſe the chaplet which adorns your head[*]." POPE has thus altered this image,

Oh! were I made by ſome transforming pow'r,
The captive bird that ſings within thy bow'r!
Then might my voice thy liſt'ning ears employ;
And I, thoſe kiſſes he receives, enjoy[†].

On three accounts the former image is preferable to the latter: for the paſtoral wildneſs, the delicacy, and the uncommonneſs of the thought. I cannot forbear adding, that the riddle of the *Royal Oak*, in the firſt Paſtoral, invented in imitation of the Virgilian ænigmas in the third eclogue, ſavours of pun, and puerile conceit.

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[*] —— —— —— —— Αιθε γενοιμαν
Α βομβευσα μελισσα, και ἐς τεον αντρον ἱκοιμαν,
Τον κισσον διαδυς, και ταν πτεριν ἁ τυ πυκασδη. Idyll. iii. 12.

[†] Paſt. ii. 45.

Say, Daphnis, ſay in what glad ſoil appears
A wondrous tree, that ſacred monarchs bears?

With what propriety could the tree, whoſe ſhade protected the king, be ſaid to be prolific of princes?

THAT POPE has not equalled Theocritus, will indeed appear leſs ſurpriſing, if we reflect, that no original writer ever remained ſo unrivalled by ſucceeding copyiſts, as this Sicilian maſter.

IF it ſhould be objected, that the barrenneſs of invention imputed to POPE from a view of his PASTORALS, is equally imputable to the Bucolics of Virgil, it may be anſwered, that whatever may be determined of the reſt, yet the firſt and laſt Eclogues of Virgil are indiſputable proofs of true genius, and power of fancy. The influence of war on the tranquility of rural life, rendered the ſubject of the firſt new, and intereſting: its compoſition is truly dramatic; and the characters of its two ſhepherds are well ſupported, and happily contraſted: and the laſt has expreſſively painted the changeful reſolutions, the wild wiſhes, the paſſionate and abrupt exclamations, of a diſappointed and deſpairing lover.

UPON the whole, the principal merit of the PASTORALS of POPE conſiſts, in their correct and muſical verſification; muſical, to a degree of which rhyme could hardly be thought capable: and in giving the firſt ſpecimen of that harmony in Engliſh verſe, which is now become indiſpenſibly neceſſary; and which has ſo forcibly and univerſally influenced the public ear, as to have rendered every moderate rhymer melodious. POPE lengthened the abruptneſs of Waller; and at the ſame time contracted the exuberance of Dryden.

I REMEMBER to have been informed, by an intimate friend of POPE, that he had once laid a deſign of writing AMERICAN

ECLOGUES: The ſubject would have been fruitful of the moſt poetical imagery; and, if properly executed, would have reſcued the author from the accuſation here urged, of having written Eclogues without invention.

OUR author, who had received an early tincture of religion, a reverence for which he preſerved to the laſt, was with juſtice convinced, that the Scriptures of God contained not only the pureſt precepts of morality, but the moſt elevated and ſublime ſtrokes of genuine poeſy; ſtrokes, as much ſuperior to any thing Heatheniſm can produce, as is Jehovah to Jupiter. This is the caſe more particularly in the exalted propheſy of Iſaiah, which POPE has ſo ſucceſsfully verſified in an Eclogue, that inconteſtably ſurpaſſes the Pollio of Virgil: although perhaps the dignity, the energy, and the ſimplicity of the original are in a few paſſages weakened and diminiſhed by florid epithets, and uſeleſs circumlocutions.

> See nature haſtes her earlieſt wreaths to bring,
> With all the incenſe of the breathing ſpring[*].—

are lines, which have too much prettineſs, and too modern an air. The judicious addition of circumſtances and adjuncts is what renders poeſy a more lively imitation of nature than proſe. POPE has been happy in introducing the following circumſtance: the prophet ſays, "The parched ground ſhall "become a pool;" Our author expreſſes this idea by ſaying, that the ſhepherd,

> —*ſhall* START amid the thirſty wild to hear
> New falls of water murmuring in his ear[†].

A ſtriking example of a ſimilar beauty may be added from Thompſon. Meliſander, in the Tragedy of AGAMEMNON, after telling us he was conveyed in a veſſel, at mid-night, to the wildeſt of the Cyclades, adds, when the pitileſs mariners had left him in that dreadful ſolitude,

> — — — — — I never heard
> A ſound ſo diſmal as their parting oars!

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[*] MESS. v. 23.

[†] v. 70.

On the other hand, the prophet has been ſometimes particular, when Pope has been only general. "Lift up thine eyes round "about, and ſee; all they gather themſelves "together, they come to thee:—The "multitude of Camels ſhall cover thee: "the Dromedaries of Median and Ephah: "all they from Sheba ſhall come: they "ſhall bring gold and incenſe, and they "ſhall ſhew forth the praiſes of the Lord. "All the Flocks of Kedar ſhall be gathered together unto thee; the Rams of "Nebaioth ſhall miniſter unto thee *." In imitating this paſſage, Pope has omitted the different beaſts that in ſo pictureſque a manner characterize the different countries which were to be gathered together on this important event, and ſays only in undiſtinguiſhing terms,

See, barbarous nations at thy gates attend,
Walk in thy light, and in thy temple bend;
See thy bright altars throng'd with proſtrate kings,
And heap'd with products of Sabæan ſprings †.

---

* Iſaiah, c. lx. v. 4, 6, 7.

† Ver. 91.

As proſperity and happineſs are deſcribed in this Eclogue by a combination of the moſt pleaſing and agreeable objects, ſo miſery and deſtruction are as forcibly delineated in the ſame Iſaiah, by the circumſtances of diſtreſs and deſolation, that were to attend the fall of that magnificent city, Babylon: and the latter is perhaps a more proper and intereſting ſubject for poetry than the former; as ſuch kinds of objects make the deepeſt impreſſion on the mind: terror being a ſtronger ſenſation than joy. Accordingly, a noble ode on the deſtruction of Babylon, taken from the fourteenth chapter of Iſaiah, has been written by Dr. Lowth; whoſe Latin prelections on the inimitable poeſy of the Hebrews, abounding in remarks entirely new, delivered in the pureſt and moſt expreſſive language, are the richeſt augmentation literature has lately received; and from which the following paſſage, gradually unfolding the ſingular beauties of this prophecy, is here cloſely, though faintly tranſlated, and inſerted as a pattern of juſt criticiſm.

THE prophet having predicted the deliverance of the Jews, and their return into their own country from their rigorous Babyloniſh captivity, inſtantly introduces them ſinging a triumphal ſong on the fall of the king of Babylon; a ſong abounding in the moſt ſplendid images, and carried on by perpetual, and thoſe very beautiful, perſonifications. The ſong begins with a ſudden exclamation of the Jews, expreſſing their joy and wonder at the unexpected change of their condition, and death of the tyrant. Earth with her inhabitants triumphs; the firs and cedars of Libanus, under which images the allegoric ſtyle frequently ſhadows the kings and princes of the Gentiles, rejoice, and inſult with reproaches the broken power of their moſt implacable foe,

> She is at reſt, the whole earth is quiet: they break
> forth into ſinging.
> Even the firs rejoice at thee, the cedars of Libanus:
> Since thou art laid low, no feller is come up againſt us.

There follows a moſt daring proſopopeia of ORCUS, or the infernal regions: he rouzes his inhabitants, the manes of princes, and the ſhades of departed kings: immediately all of them ariſe from their thrones, and walk forward to meet the king of Babylon; they inſult and deride him, and gather conſolation from his calamity.

> Art thou alſo made weak as we? art thou made like unto us?
> Is thy pride daſhed down to Orcus, the noiſe of thy harps?
> The worm is ſtrewn under thee, the earth-worm is thy covering!

The Jews are again repreſented ſpeaking: they moſt ſtrongly exaggerate his remarkable fall, by an exclamation formed in the manner of funeral lamentations:

> How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, ſon of the morning!
> Thou art daſhed down to the earth, thou that didſt cruſh the nations!

They next repreſent the king himſelf ſpeaking, and madly boaſting of his unbounded power, whence the prodigiouſneſs of his ruin is wonderfully aggravated. Nor is this enough; a new character is immediately formed: Thoſe are introduced who found the body of the king of Babylon caſt out: they ſurvey it cloſely and attentively, and at laſt hardly know it.

> Is this the man who made earth tremble, who ſhook
> the kingdoms?
> Who made the world a ſolitude, and deſtroyed it's
> cities?

They reproach him with the loſs of the common rite of ſepulture, which was deſervedly denied to him for his cruelty and oppreſſion, and curſe his name, his race, and poſterity. The ſcene is cloſed by a moſt awful ſpeech of God himſelf, menacing a perpetual extirpation to the king of Babylon, to his deſcendants, and to his city; and confirming the immutability of his councils by the ratification of a ſolemn oath.

WHAT images, how various, how thick-ſown, how ſublime, exalted with what energy, what expreſſions, figures, and ſentiments,

are

are here accumulated together! We hear the Jews, the cedars of Libanus, the ſhades of the departed kings, the kings of Babylon, thoſe who find his body, and laſtly Jehovah himſelf, all ſpeaking in order; and behold them acting their ſeveral parts, as it were in a drama. One continued action is carried on; or rather a various and manifold ſeries of different actions is connected;—an excellence, more peculiarly appropriated to the ſublimer ode, and conſummately diſplayed in this poem of Iſaiah, which is the moſt perfect and unexampled model, among all the monuments of antiquity. The perſonifications are frequent, but not confuſed; are bold but not affected: a free, lofty, and truly divine ſpirit predominates through the whole. Nor is any thing wanting to crown and complete the ſublimity of this ode with abſolute beauty; nor can the Greek or Roman poeſy produce any thing that is ſimilar, or ſecond, to this ode*."

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* Prælect xiii. pag. 121.

It cannot be thought ſtrange, that he who could ſo judiciouſly explain, could as poetically expreſs, the ideas of Iſaiah: the latter he has performed in many inſtances; but in none more ſtrikingly than in the following, which magnificently repreſents the Meſſiah treading the wine-preſs in his anger, and which an impartial judge, not blinded by the charms of antiquity, will think equal to many deſcriptions in Virgil, in point of elegance and energy:

——— Ille patris vires indutus et iram
Dira rubens graditur, per ſtragem et fracta potentum
Agmina, prona ſolo; proſtratiſque hoſtibus ultor
Inſultat; ceu præla novo ſpumantia muſto
Exercens, ſalit attritas calcator in uvas,
Congeſtamque ſtruem ſubigit: cæde atra recenti
Crura madent, rorantque inſperſæ ſanguine veſtes *.

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* Prælect. vii. pag. 6:.

SECT.

SECT. II.

Of WINDSOR-FOREST, *and* LYRIC *Pieces*.

DESCRIPTIVE Poetry was by no means the ſhining talent of POPE. This aſſertion may be manifeſted by the few images introduced in the poem before us, which are not equally applicable to any place whatſoever. Rural beauty in general, and not the peculiar beauties of the Foreſt of Windſor, are here deſcribed. Nor are the ſports of ſetting, ſhooting, and fiſhing, included between the ninety-third and one hundred and forty-ſixth verſes, to which the reader is referred, at all more appropriated. The ſtag-chaſe, that immediately follows, although ſome of the lines are incomparably good *, is not ſo full, ſo animated, and ſo circumſtantiated, as that of Somerville.

THE digreſſion that deſcribes the demolition of the thirty villages by William the Conqueror, is well imagined; particularly,

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* See particularly, ver. 151.

Round broken columns claſping ivy twin'd,
O'er heaps of ruin ſtalk'd the ſtately hind;
The fox obſcene to gaping tombs retires,
And ſavage howlings fill the ſacred quires *.

Though I cannot forbear thinking, that the following picture of the ruins of Godſtow-Nunnery, drawn, it ſhould ſeem, on the ſpot, and worthy the hand of Paul Brill, is by no means excelled by the foregoing.

Qua nudo Roſamonda humilis ſub culmine tecti
  Marginis obſcuri ſervat inane decus,
Rara intermiſſæ circum veſtigia molis,
  Et ſola in vacuo tramite porta labat:
Sacræ olim ſedes riguæ convallis in umbra,
  Et veteri pavidum religione nemus.
Pallentes nocturna ciens campana ſorores
  Hinc matutinum ſæpe monebat avem;
Hinc procul in media tardæ caliginis hora
  Prodidit arcanas arcta feneſtra faces:
Nunc muſcoſa extant ſparſim de ceſpite ſaxa,
  Nunc muro avellunt germen agreſte boves †.

Voltaire, that lively maintainer of many a paradox, is inclined to diſpute the truth of the devaſtation imputed to William I. but for a reaſon very ſtrange and inconcluſive. "Une telle action, ſays he, eſt trop inſenſée pour etre vraiſemblable. Les hiſtoriens ne font pas attention qu'il faut au moins vingt années pour qu'un nouveau plan d'arbres devienne une forêt propre a là chaſſe. On lui fait ſemer cette forêt en 1080, il avoit alors 63 ans. Quelle apparence y a-t-il, qu'un homme raiſonable ait à cet âge détruit des villages pour ſemer quinze lieues en bois, dans l'eſpérance d'y chaſſer un jour *?" There is indeed ſome probability that, the character of this prince has been miſrepreſented, and his oppreſſions magnified. The law of the curfeu-bell, by which every inhabitant of England was obliged to extinguiſh his fire and candles at eight in the evening, has been uſually alleged as the inſtitution of a capricious tyrant. But this law, as Voltaire † rightly obſerves, was ſo far from being abſurdly tyrannical, that it was an ancient cuſtom eſtabliſhed among all

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* Ver. 69.

† Carmina Quadrageſ. Oxon. 1748. pag. 3.

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* Abregé de l'Hiſtoire Univerſelle, &c. tom. i. pag. 280.

† Ibid.

the monaſteries of the north. Their houſes were built of wood, and ſo cautious a method to prevent fire, was an object worthy a prudent legiſlator. A more amiable idea than Pope has here exhibited of the Conqueror, is given us of the ſame prince, by that diligent enquirer into antiquity the Preſident Henault, in a paſſage that contains ſome curious particulars, characteriſtical of the manners of that age. "This monarch protected letters, at a time, when books were ſo rare and uncommon, that a counteſs of Anjou gave for a collection of homilies, two hundred ſheep, a meaſure of wheat, another of rye, a third of millet, and a certain number of the ſkins of martens*" But to return. The ſtory of † Lodona is prettily Ovidian; but there is ſcarcely a ſingle incident in it, but what is borrowed from ſome transformation of Ovid. The picture of a virtuous and learned man in

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* Novel Abregé Chronologique de l' Hiſtoire de France. tom. i. pag. 126. To this uſeful and entertaining work Voltaire has often been deeply indebted, without confeſſing his obligation.

† Ver. 171.

retirement

retirement * is highly finiſhed, as the poet was here in his proper element, recommending integrity and ſcience. He has no where diſcovered more poetic enthuſiaſm, than where, ſpeaking of the poets who lived or died near this ſpot, he breaks out,

> I ſeem through conſecrated walks to rove,
> I hear ſoft muſic die along the grove;
> Led by the ſound I roam from ſhade to ſhade,
> By godlike poets venerable made †.

The enumeration of the princes who were either born or interred at Windſor is judiciouſly introduced. Yet I have frequently wondered, that he ſhould have omitted the opportunity of deſcribing at length it's venerable ancient caſtle, and the fruitful and extenſive proſpects ‡ which it commands. He ſlides with dexterity and addreſs from ſpeaking of the miſeries of the civil war to the

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* Ver. 233. † Ver. 265.

‡ The great improvements lately made near Windſor-lodge, by the duke of Cumberland, particularly the magnificent lake and caſcade, highly deſerve to be celebrated by ſome future Pope; and would have contributed not a little to the beauty of the poem now before us.

bleſſings of peace*. OLD FATHER THAMES is raiſed, and acts, and ſpeaks, with becoming dignity. And though the trite and obvious inſignia of a river god are attributed, yet there is one circumſtance in his appearance highly picturesque,

> His ſea-green mantle waving with the wind †.

The relievo upon his urn is alſo finely imagined,

> The figur'd ſtreams in waves of ſilver roll'd,
> And on their banks Auguſta roſe in gold ‡.

He has with exquiſite ſkill ſelected only thoſe rivers as attendants of Thames, who are his ſubjects, his tributaries, or neighbours. I cannot reſiſt the pleaſure of tranſcribing the paſſage.

> Firſt the fam'd authors of his ancient name,
> The winding Iſis, and the fruitful Tame:
> The Kennet ſwift, for ſilver eels renown'd,
> The Loddon ſlow, with verdant oſiers crown'd;
> Cole, whoſe dark ſtreams his flowery iſlands lave,
> And chalky Wey, that rolls a milky wave:

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* Ver. 324. † Ver. 48. ‡ Ver. 353.

The blue tranſparent Vandalis appears;
The gulphy Lee his ſedgy treſſes rears;
The ſullen Mole that hides his diving flood,
And ſilent Darent ſtain'd with Britiſh blood *.

As I before produced a paſſage of Milton which I thought ſuperior to a ſimilar one of POPE, I ſhall, in order to preſerve impartiality, produce another from Milton, in which I think him inferior to the laſt quoted paſſage, except perhaps in the third line; firſt remarking that both authors are much indebted to Spenſer †, and perhaps to Drayton.

Rivers ariſe! whether thou be the ſon
Of utmoſt Tweed, or Ooſe, or gulphy Dun,
Or Trent, who like ſome earth-born giant ſpreads
His thirty arms along th' indented meads,
Or ſullen Mole, that runneth underneath,
Or Severn ſwift, guilty of maiden's death,
Or rocky Avon, or of ſedgy Lee,
Or coaly Tine, or ancient hallow'd Dee,
Or Humber loud that keeps the Scythian's name,
Or Medway ſmooth, or royal-towred Thame ‡.

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[*] Ver. 337.

[†] Fairy Queen, B. iv. C. 11.

[‡] At a vacation exerciſe, &c. Ver. 91. Milton was now aged but nineteen.

THE poets, both ancient and modern, are obliged to the rivers for ſome of their moſt ſtriking deſcriptions. The Tiber, and the Nile of Virgil, the Aufidus of Horace, the Sabrina of Milton, and the Scamander of Homer, are among their capital figures.

THE influences and effects of peace, and its conſequence, a diffuſive commerce, are expreſſed by ſelecting ſuch circumſtances, as are beſt adapted to ſtrike the imagination by lively pictures; the ſelection of which chiefly conſtitutes true poetry. An hiſtorian or proſe-writer might ſay, "Then ſhall the moſt "diſtant nations croud into my port:" a poet ſets before your eyes "the ſhips of uncouth "form," that ſhall arrive in the Thames *;

> And *feather'd* people croud my wealthy ſide;
> And *naked* youths, and *painted* chiefs admire
> Our ſpeech, our colour, and our ſtrange *attire*.

And the benevolence and poetry of the ſucceeding wiſh, are worthy admiration,

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* Ver. 400. et ſeq.

Till the freed Indians, in their native groves,
Reap their own fruits, and woo their ſable loves;
Peru once more a race of kings behold,
And other Mexicos be roof'd with gold [*].

The two epithets *native* and *ſable* have peculiar elegance and force; and as Peru was particularly famous for its long ſucceſſion of Incas, and Mexico for many magnificent works of maſſy gold, there is great propriety in fixing the reſtoration of the grandeur of each to that object, for which each was once ſo remarkable.

THE groupe of allegorical perſonages that ſucceeds the laſt mentioned lines, are worthy the pencil of Rubens or Julio Romano: it may, perhaps, however be wiſhed that the epithets *barbarous* (diſcord), *mad* (ambition), *hateful* (envy) [†], had been particular and pictureſque, inſtead of general and indiſcriminating; though it may poſſibly be urged, that in deſcribing the dreadful inhabitants of the portal of hell, Virgil has not always uſed ſuch adjuncts and epithets as a painter or ſtatuary might work after; he ſays only *ultrices* CURÆ, *mortiferum* BELLUM, *mala* MENTIS GAUDIA; particularly, *maleſuada* is only applied to FAMES, inſtead of a word that might repreſent the meagre and ghaſtly figure intended. I make no ſcruple of adding, that in this famous paſſage, Virgil has exhibited no images ſo lively and diſtinct, as theſe living figures painted by POPE, each of them with their proper inſignia and attributes.

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[*] Ver. 407.

[†] Ver. 411. et ſeq.

> ——— ENVY her own ſnakes ſhall feel [*],
> And PERSECUTION mourn his broken wheel;
> There FACTION roar, REBELLION bite her chain,
> And gaſping FURIES thirſt for blood in vain.

A PERSON of no ſmall rank has informed me, that Mr. Addiſon was inexpreſſibly chagrined at this noble concluſion of WINDSOR-FOREST, both as a politician and as a poet. As a politician, becauſe it ſo highly celebrated that treaty of peace which he deemed ſo pernicious to the liberties of Europe; and as a poet, becauſe he was deeply conſcious that his own CAMPAIGN, that gazette in rhyme, contained no ſtrokes of ſuch genuine and ſublime poetry as the concluſion before us.

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[*] Ver. 417. et ſeq.

IT is one of the greateſt and moſt pleaſing arts of deſcriptive poetry, to introduce moral ſentences and inſtructions in an oblique and indirect manner, in places where one naturally expects only painting and amuſement. We have virtue, as POPE remarks *, put upon us by ſurprize, and are pleaſed to find a thing where we ſhould never have looked to meet with it. I muſt do a noble Engliſh poet the juſtice to obſerve, that it is this particular art that is the very diſtinguiſhing excellence of COOPER's-HILL; throughout which, the deſcriptions of places, and images raiſed by the poet, are ſtill tending to ſome hint, or leading into ſome reflection, upon moral life, or political inſtitution; much in the ſame manner as the real ſight of ſuch ſcenes and proſpects is apt to give the mind a com-

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* Iliad. B. 16. in the notes: Ver. 465.

compoſed turn, and incline it to thoughts and contemplations that have a relation to the object. This is the great charm of the incomparable ELEGY written in a Country Church-Yard. Having mentioned the ruſtic monuments and ſimple epitaphs of the ſwains, the amiable poet falls into a very natural reflection:

For who, to dumb forgetfulneſs a prey,
This pleaſing anxious being e'er reſign'd,
Left the warm precincts of the chearful day,
Nor caſt one longing lingring look behind?

OF this art POPE has exhibited ſome ſpecimens in the poem we are examining, but not ſo many as might be expected from a mind ſo ſtrongly inclined to a moral way of writing. After ſpeaking of hunting the hare, he immediately ſubjoins, much in the ſpirit of Denham,

Beaſts urg'd by us their fellow beaſts purſue,
And learn of man each other to undo *.

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* Ver. 124.

Where he is deſcribing the tyrannies formerly exerciſed in this kingdom,

> Cities laid waſte, they ſtorm'd the dens and caves;

He inſtantly adds, with an indignation becoming a true lover of liberty,

> For wiſer brutes were backward to be ſlaves *.

BUT I am afraid our author in the following paſſage has fallen into a fault very uncommon in his writings, a reflection that is very farfetched and forced;

> Here waving groves a chequer'd ſcene diſplay,
> And part admit, and part exclude the day;
> As ſome coy nymph her lover's warm addreſs
> Nor quite indulges, nor can quite repreſs †.

Bohours would rank this compariſon among falſe thoughts and Italian conceits; ſuch particularly as abound in the works of Marino. The fallacy conſiſts in giving deſign and artifice to the wood, as well as to the coquette; and in putting the light of the ſun and the warmth of a lover on a level.

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* Ver. 50. † Ver. 16.

A PATHETIC reflection, properly introduced into a deſcriptive poem, will have greater force and beauty, and more deeply intereſt a reader, than a moral one. When POPE therefore has deſcribed a pheaſant ſhot, he breaks out into a very maſterly exclamation;

Ah! what avail his gloſſy varying dyes,
His purple creſt, and ſcarlet-circled eyes,
The vivid green his ſhining plumes unfold,
His painted wings, and breaſt that flames with gold*.

THIS exquiſite picture heightens the diſtreſs, and powerfully excites the commiſeration of the reader. Under this head, it would be unpardonable to omit a capital, and, I think, the moſt excellent example extant, of the beauty here intended, in the third Georgic of Virgil †. The poet having mournfully deſcribed a ſteer ſtruck with a peſtilence, and falling down dead in the middle of his work, artfully reminds us of his former ſervices;

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* Ver. 115.

† Ver. 525.

Quid

Quid labor aut benefacta juvant? Quid vomere terras
Invertiſſe graves * ? — — —

This circumſtance would have been ſufficient, as it raiſed our pity from a motive of gratitude; but with this circumſtance the tender Virgil was not content; what he adds therefore of the natural undeviating temperance of the animal, who cannot have contracted diſeaſe by exceſs, and who for that reaſon deſerved a better fate, is moving beyond compare:

——— Atqui non Maſſica Bacchi
Munera, non illis epulæ nocuere repoſtæ!
Frondibus, et victu paſcuntur ſimplicis herbæ;
Pocula ſunt fontes liquidi, atque exercita curſu
Flumina, nec ſomnos abrumpit cura ſalubres.

Of Engliſh poets, perhaps, none have excelled the ingenious Mr. Dyer in this oblique inſtruction, into which he frequently ſteals imperceptibly, in his little deſcriptive poem entitled Grongar Hill, where he diſpoſes

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* By the epithet graves Virgil inſinuates, after his manner, the difficulty and laboriousneſs of the work.

every object ſo as it may give occaſion for ſome obſervation on human life. Denham himſelf is not ſuperiour to Mr. Dyer in this particular. After painting a landſchape very extenſive and diverſified, he adds;

Thus is nature's veſture wrought,
To inſtruct our wandering thought,
Thus ſhe dreſſes green and gay,
To diſperſe our cares away!

Another view from his favourite ſpot, gives him an opportunity for ſliding into the following moralities:

* How cloſe and ſmall the hedges lie!
What ſtreaks of meadows croſs the eye!
A ſtep methinks may paſs the ſtream,
So little diſtant dangers ſeem;
So we miſtake the Future's face
Ey'd through Hope's deluding glaſs.
As yon ſummits ſoft and fair,
Clad in colours of the air,
Which to thoſe who journey near,
Barren and brown and rough appear,
Still we tread the ſame coarſe way,
The preſent's ſtill a cloudy day.

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* In this light alſo his poem on the Ruins of Rome deſerves a peruſal. Dodſley's Miſcell. vol. i. pag. 78.

The unexpected inſertion of ſuch reflections, imparts to us the ſame pleaſure that we feel, when in wandering through a wilderneſs or grove, we ſuddenly behold in the turning of the walk, a ſtatue of ſome VIRTUE or MUSE.

It may be obſerved in general, that Deſcription of the external beauties of nature, is uſually the firſt effort of a young genius, before he hath ſtudied manners and paſſions. Some of Milton's moſt early, as well as moſt exquiſite pieces, are his Lycidas, L'Allegro, and Il Penſeroſo; if we may except his Ode on the Nativity of Chriſt, which is indeed prior in the order of time, and in which a penetrating critic might have diſcovered the ſeeds of that boundleſs imagination, which afterwards was to produce the Paradiſe Loſt. This ode, which, by the way, is not ſufficiently read nor admired, is alſo of the deſcriptive kind; but the objects of its deſcription are great, and ſtriking to the imagination; the falſe deities of the Heathen forſaking their temples on the birth of our Saviour; divination and oracles at an end; which facts, though perhaps not hiſtorically true, are poetically beautiful.

The lonely mountains o'er,
And the reſounding ſhore,
A voice of weeping heard, and loud lament!
From haunted ſpring, and dale
Edg'd with poplar pale,
The parting Genius is with ſighing ſent;
With flower-enwoven treſſes torn
The nymyhs in twilight ſhade of tangled thickets mourn[*].

The lovers of poetry, and to ſuch only I write, will not be diſpleaſed at my preſenting them alſo with the following image, which is ſo ſtrongly conceived, that methinks I ſee at this inſtant the dæmon it repreſents;

And ſullen Moloch fled
Hath left in ſhadows dread,
His burning idol all of blackeſt hue;
In vain with cimbals ring
They call the grieſly king,
In diſmal dance about the furnace blue [†].

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[*] On the morning of Chriſt's Nativity. Newton's edition, octavo. Vol. ii. pag. 28, 29, of the Miſcellaneous Poems.

[†] See alſo verſes written at a Solemn muſic, and on the Paſſion, in the ſame volume; and a vacation exerciſe, pag. 9. in all which are to be found many ſtrokes of the ſublime.

Attention is irreſiſtibly awakened and engaged by that air of ſolemnity, and enthuſiaſm, that reigns in the following ſtanzas:

The oracles are dumb *,
No voice or hideous hum,
Runs through the arched roof in words deceiving;
No nightly trance, or breathed ſpell,
Inſpires the pale-ey'd prieſt from the prophetic cell.

Such is the power of true poetry, that one is almoſt inclined to believe the ſuperſtitions here alluded to, to be real; and the ſucceeding circumſtances make one ſtart and look around;

In conſecrated earth,
And on the holy hearth,
The lars and lemurs moan with midnight plaint;
In urns and altars round
A drear and dying ſound
Affrights the flamens at their ſervice quaint!

Methinks we behold the prieſts interrupted in the middle of the ſecret ceremonies they were performing, "in their temples dim," gazing with ghaſtly eyes on each other, and

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* Pag. 28.

terrified, and wondering from whence theſe aërial voices ſhould proceed! I have dwelt chiefly on this ode as much leſs celebrated than L'Allegro and Il Penſeroſo, which are now univerſally known; but which by a ſtrange fatality lay in a ſort of obſcurity, the private enjoyment of a few curious readers, till they were ſet to admirable muſic by Mr. Handel. And indeed this volume of Milton's miſcellaneous poems has not till very lately met with ſuitable regard. Shall I offend any rational admirer of POPE by remarking, that theſe juvenile deſcriptive poems of Milton, as well as his latin elegies, are of a ſtrain far more exalted than any the former author can boaſt? Let me add at the ſame time, what juſtice obliges me to add, that they are far more incorrect. For in the very ode before us, occur one or two paſſages, that are puerile and affected, to a degree not to be parallelled in the purer, but leſs elevated, compoſitions of POPE. The ſeaſon being winter, when Jeſus was born, Milton ſays,

Nature, in awe to HIM [*],
Had dofft her gawdy trim.

And afterwards obſerves, in a very epigrammatic and forced thought, unſuitable to the dignity of the ſubject and of the reſt of the ode, that, “ ſhe wooed the air, to hide her guilty front with innocent ſnow,”

And on her naked ſhame [†],
Pollute with ſinful blame,
The ſaintly veil of maiden white to throw,
Confounded that her Maker's eyes
Should look ſo near upon her foul deformities.

“ C'eſt aſſez, to apply the words of the ſenſible Voltaire, d'avoir cru appercévoir quelques erreurs d'invention dans ce grand genie ; c'eſt une conſolation pour un eſprit auſſi bornè que le mien, d'etre bien perſuadé que le plus grands hommes ſe trompent comme le vulgaire.”

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[*] This conceit, with the reſt, however is more excuſable, if we recollect how great a reader, eſpecially at this time, Milton was of the Italian Poets. It is certain that Milton, in the beginning of the ode, had the third ſonnet of Petrarch ſtrong in his fancy,

Era 'l giorno, ch 'al ſol ſi ſcoloraro
Per la pietà del ſuo fattore i rai;
Quand', &c.

[†] Milton's Miſcellaneous Poems, vol. ii. pag. 19.

It would be unpardonable to conclude theſe remarks on deſcriptive poeſy, without taking notice of the SEASONS of Thomſon, who had peculiar and powerful talents for this ſpecies of compoſition. Let the reader therefore pardon a digreſſion, if ſuch it be, on his merits and character.

THOMSON was bleſſed with a ſtrong and copious fancy; he hath enriched poetry with a variety of new and original images, which he painted from nature itſelf, and from his own actual obſervations: his deſcriptions have therefore a diſtinctneſs and truth, which are utterly wanting to thoſe, of poets who have only copied from each other, and have never looked abroad on the objects themſelves. Thomſon was accuſtomed to wander away into the country for days and for weeks, attentive to, "each rural ſight, each rural "ſound;" while many a poet who has dwelt for years in the Strand, has attempted to deſcribe fields and rivers, and generally ſucceeded accordingly. Hence that nauſeous repetition of the ſame circumſtances; hence that diſguſting impropriety of introducing what may be called a ſet of hereditary images, without proper regard to the age, or climate, or occaſion in which they were formerly uſed. Though the diction of the SEASONS is ſometimes harſh and inharmonious, and ſometimes turgid and obſcure, and though in many inſtances, the numbers are not ſufficiently diverſified by different pauſes, yet is this poem on the whole, from the numberleſs ſtrokes of nature in which it abounds, one of the moſt captivating and amuſing in our language, and which, as its beauties are not of a tranſitory kind, as depending on particular cuſtoms and manners, will ever be peruſed with delight. The ſcenes of Thomſon are frequently as wild and romantic as thoſe of Salvator Roſa, varied with precipices and torrents, and "caſtled cliffs," and deep vallies, with piny mountains, and the gloomieſt caverns. Innumerable are the little circumſtances in his deſcriptions, totally unobſerved by all his predeceſſors.

deceſſors. What poet hath ever taken notice of the leaf, that towards the end of autumn,

Inceſſant ruſtles from the mournful grove[*],
Oft ſtartling ſuch as, ſtudious, walk below,
And ſlowly circles through the waving air?

Or who, in ſpeaking of a ſummer evening hath ever mentioned,

The quail that clamours for his running mate?

Or the following natural image at the ſame time of the year?

Wide o'er the thiſtly lawn, as ſwells the breeze,
A whitening ſhower of vegetable down
Amuſive floats[†]. — — —

In what other poet, do we find the ſilence and expectation that precedes an April ſhower inſiſted on, as in ver. 165 of SPRING? Or where,

The ſtealing ſhower is ſcarce to patter heard,
By ſuch as wander through the foreſt walks,
Beneath th' umbrageous multitude of leaves[‡].

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[*] Ver. 1000. [†] Ver. 1645. [‡] Ver. 176.

How full, particular and pictureſque is this aſſemblage of circumſtances that attend a very keen froſt in a night of winter!

> Loud rings the frozen earth, and hard reflects
> A double noiſe; while at his evening watch
> The village dog deters the nightly thief;
> The heifer lows; the diſtant water-fall
> Swells in the breeze; and with the haſty tread
> Of traveller, the hollow-ſounding plain
> Shakes from afar *. — — — —

In no one ſubject are common writers more confuſed and unmeaning, than in their deſcriptions of rivers, which are generally ſaid only to wind and to murmur, while their qualities and courſes are ſeldom accurately marked. Examine the exactneſs of the enſuing deſcription, and conſider what a perfect idea it communicates to the mind.

> Around th' adjoining brook, that purls along
> The vocal grove, now fretting o'er a rock,
> Now ſcarcely moving through a reedy pool,
> Now ſtarting to a ſudden ſtream, and now
> Gently diffus'd into a limpid plain;
> A various groupe the herds and flocks compoſe,
> Rural confuſion †! — — — — —

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* Winter, ver. 735.

† Summer, ver. 477.

A groupe worthy the pencil of Giacomo da Baſſano, and ſo minutely delineated, that he might have worked from this ſketch;

— — — On the graſſy bank
Some ruminating lie; while others ſtand
Half in the flood, and often bending ſip
The circling ſurface. — — —

He adds, that the ox in the middle of them,

— — — — From his ſides
The troublous inſects laſhes, to his ſides
Returning ſtill[*]. — — — —

A natural circumſtance, that to the beſt of my remembrance hath eſcaped even the natural Theocritus. Nor do I recollect that any poet hath been ſtruck with the murmurs of the numberleſs inſects, that ſwarm abroad at the noon of a ſummer's day; as attendants of the evening indeed, they have been mentioned;

Reſounds the living ſurface of the ground:
Nor undelightful is the ceaſeleſs hum
To him who muſes through the woods at noon;
Or drowſy ſhepherd, as he lies reclin'd
With half-ſhut eyes[†]. — — —

[*] Summer, ver. 485. et ſeq.

[†] Summer, ver. 299.

But the novelty and nature we admire in the deſcriptions of Thomſon are by no means his only excellencies; he is equally to be praiſed, for impreſſing on our minds the effects, which the ſcene delineated would have on the preſent ſpectator or hearer. Thus having ſpoken of the roaring of the ſavages in a wilderneſs of Africa, he introduces a captive, who though juſt eſcaped from * priſon and ſlavery under the tyrant of Morocco, is ſo terrified and aſtoniſhed at the dreadful uproar, that

> The wretch half wiſhes for his bonds again.

Thus alſo having deſcribed a caravan loſt and overwhelmed in one of thoſe whirlwinds that ſo frequently agitate and lift up the whole ſands of the deſart, he finiſhes his picture by adding that,

> — — — In Cairo's crouded ſtreets †,
> Th' impatient merchant, wondering waits in vain,
> And Mecca ſaddens at the long delay.

And thus, laſtly, in deſcribing the peſtilence that deſtroyed the Britiſh troops at the ſiege of

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* Summer, ver. 925.

† Ver. 966.

of Carthagena, he has uſed a circumſtance inimitably lively, picturesque, and ſtriking to the imagination; for he ſays that the admiral not only heard the groans of the ſick that echoed from ſhip to ſhip, but that he alſo penſively ſtood, and liſtened at midnight to the daſhing of the waters, occaſioned by throwing the dead bodies into the ſea;

> Heard, nightly, plung'd into the ſullen waves,
> The frequent corſe *. — — — —

A minute and particular enumeration of circumſtances judiciouſly ſelected, is what chiefly diſcriminates poetry from hiſtory, and renders the former, for that reaſon, a more cloſe and faithful repreſentation of nature than the latter. And if our poets would accuſtom themſelves to contemplate fully every object, before they attempted to deſcribe it, they would not fail of giving their readers more new and more complete images than they generally do †.

THESE

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* Ver. 1035.

† A ſummer evening, for inſtance, after a ſhower, has been frequently deſcribed: but never, that I can recollect, ſo juſtly as

THESE obſervations on Thomſon, which however would not have been ſo large, if

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as in the following lines, whoſe greateſt beauty is that hinted above, a ſimple enumeration of the appearances of nature, and of what is actually to be ſeen at ſuch a time. They are not unworthy the correct and pure Tibullus. They were written by the late Mr. Robert Bedingfield, author of the Education of Achilles, a poem, in Dodſley's Miſcellanies.

Veſpere ſub verno, tandem actis imbribus, æther
  Guttatim ſparſis rorat apertus aquis.
Aureus abrupto curvamine deſuper arcus
  Fulget, et ancipiti lumine tingit agros.
Continuò ſenſus pertentat frigoris aura
  Vivida, et inſinuans mulcet amænus odor.
Pallentes ſparſim accreſcunt per paſcua fungi,
  Lætius et torti graminis herba viret.
Plurimus annoſâ decuſſus ab arbore limax
  In putri lentum tramite ſulcat iter.
Splendidus accendit per dumos lampida vermis,
  Roſcida dum tremulâ ſemita luce micat.

Theſe are the particular circumſtances that uſually ſucceed a ſhower at that ſeaſon, and yet theſe are new and untouched by any other writer. The Carmina Quadrageſimalia, volume the ſecond, printed at Oxford 1748, from whence this is tranſcribed, (page 14,) contain many copies of exquiſite deſcriptive poetry, in a genuine claſſical ſtyle. See particularly The Rivers, page 4. The Morning, page 12. The Houſe of Care, from Spenſer, page 16. The Mahometan paradiſe, page 32. The Trees of different ſoils, page 63. The Bird's Neſt, page 82. Geneva, page 89. Virgil's tomb, page 97. The Indian, page 118. The Houſe of Diſcord, page 133. Columbus firſt diſcovering the land of the Weſt Indies, page 125, &c.

there had been already any conſiderable criticiſm on his character, might be ſtill augmented by an examination and developement of the beauties in the Loves of the birds, in SPRING, verſe 580. A view of the torrid zone in SUMMER, verſe 626. The riſe of fountains and rivers in AUTUMN, verſe 781. A man periſhing in the ſnows, in WINTER, verſe 277. The wolves deſcending from the Alps, and a view of winter within the polar circle, verſe 809, which are all of them highly-finiſhed originals, excepting a few of thoſe blemiſhes intimated above. WINTER is in my apprehenſion the moſt valuable of theſe four poems; the ſcenes of it, like thoſe of Il Penſeroſo of Milton, being of that awful, ſolemn, and penſive kind, on which a great genius beſt delights to dwell.

POPE it ſeems was of opinion, that deſcriptive poetry is a compoſition as abſurd as a feaſt made up of ſauces: and I know many other perſons that think meanly of it. I will not preſume to ſay it is equal, either in

dignity

dignity or utility, to thoſe compoſitions that lay open the internal conſtitution of man, and that IMITATE characters, manners, and ſentiments. I may however remind ſuch contemners of it, that, in a ſiſter-art, landſchape-painting claims the very next rank to hiſtory-painting; being ever preferred to ſingle portraits, to pieces of ſtill-life, to droll figures, to fruit and flower-pieces; that Titian thought it no diminution of his genius, to ſpend much of his time in works of the former ſpecies; and that, if their principles lead them to condemn Thomſon, they muſt alſo condemn the Georgics of Virgil, and the greateſt part of the nobleſt deſcriptive poem extant, I mean that of Lucretius.

WE are next to ſpeak of the LYRIC pieces of POPE. He uſed to declare, that if Dryden had finiſhed a tranſlation of the Iliad, he would not have attempted one after ſo great a maſter; he might have ſaid with more propriety, I will not write a muſic-ode * after Alexander's Feaſt, which the

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* He wrote this Ode at the requeſt of Steele.

variety and harmony of its numbers, and the beauty and force of its images, have conſpired to place at the head of modern lyric compoſitions. This of Mr. POPE is, however, indiſputably the ſecond of the kind, * "propior tamen primo quam tertio," to

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* The inferiority of Addiſon's Ode, to POPE's on this ſubject is manifeſt and remarkable. What proſaic tameneſs and inſipidity do we meet with in the following lines?

Cecilia's name does all our numbers grace,
From every voice the tuneful accents fly,
In ſoaring trebles now it riſes high,
And now it ſinks and dwells upon the baſe.

This almoſt deſcends to burleſque, What follows is hardly rhyme, and ſurely not poetry:

Conſecrate the place and day,
To muſic and CECILIA.
Muſic the greateſt *good* that mortals know.—
Muſic can noble *hints* impart.—

There follows in this ſtanza, which is the third, a deſcription of a ſubject very trite, Orpheus drawing the beaſts about him. POPE ſhewed his ſuperior judgment in taking no notice of this old ſtory, and ſelecting a more new, as well as more ſtriking incident, in the life of Orpheus. It was the cuſtom of this time, for almoſt every rhymer to try his hand in an ode on St. Cecilia; we find many deſpicable rhapſodies, ſo called, in Tonſon's Miſcellanies. We have there alſo preſerved another, and an earlier ode, of Dryden on this ſubject. One ſtanza of which I cannot forbear inſerting in this note. It was ſet to muſic, 1687, by I. Baptiſta Draghi.

to uſe an expreſſion of Quintilian. The firſt ſtanza is almoſt a perfect concert of itſelf; every different Inſtrument is deſcribed and illuſtrated, in numbers, that admirably repreſent, and correſpond, to its different qualities and genius. The beginning of the ſecond ſtanza, on the power which muſic exerts over the paſſions, is a little flat, and by no means equal to the concluſion of that ſtanza. The animating ſong that Orpheus ſung to the Argonauts, copied from Valerius

What paſſion cannot muſic raiſe and quell!
  When Jubal ſtruck the chorded ſhell,
  His liſt'ning brethren ſtood around,
  And wondering on their faces fell,
  To worſhip that celeſtial ſound:
Leſs than a god they thought there could not dwell,
  Within the hollow of that ſhell,
  That ſpoke ſo ſweetly and ſo well.
What paſſion cannot muſic raiſe and quell!

This is ſo complete and engaging a hiſtory-piece, that I knew a perſon of taſte who was reſolved to have it executed, if an artiſt could have been found, on one ſide of his ſalloon. In which caſe, ſaid he, the painter has nothing to do, but to ſubſtitute colours for words, the deſign being finiſhed to his hands. The reader doubtleſs obſerves the fine effect of the repetition of the laſt line; as well as the ſtroke of nature, in making theſe rude hearers imagine ſome god lay concealed in this firſt muſician's inſtrument.

Flaccus, for that of Apollonius is of a different nature, is the happily choſen ſubject of the third. On hearing which,

Each chief his ſevenfold ſhield diſplay'd,
And half unſheath'd the ſhining blade;

Which effects of the ſong, however lively, do not equal the force and ſpirit of what Dryden aſcribes to the ſong of his Grecian artiſt; for when Timotheus cries out REVENGE, raiſes the furies, and calls up to Alexander's view a troop of Grecian ghoſts that were ſlain and left unburied, inglorious and forgotten, each of them waving a torch in his hand, and pointing to the hoſtile temples of the Perſians, and demanding vengeance of their prince, he inſtantly ſtarted from his throne,

— Seiz'd a flambeau with zeal to deſtroy *,

while Thais and the attendant princes ruſhed out with him to ſet fire to the city. The

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* Theſe anapeſts, for ſuch they are, have a fine effect.

whole train of imagery in this ſtanza is alive, ſublime, and animated to an unparallelled degree; the poet had ſo ſtrongly poſſeſſed himſelf of the action deſcribed, that he places it fully before the eyes of the reader.

THE deſcent of Orpheus into hell is gracefully introduced in the fourth ſtanza, as it naturally flowed from the ſubject of the preceding one; the deſcription of the infernal regions is well imagined, and the effects of the muſician's lyre on the inhabitants of hell, are elegantly tranſlated from the fourth Georgic of Virgil *, and happily adapted to the ſubject in queſtion. The ſupplicating ſong at the beginning of the fifth ſtanza, is highly pathetic and poetical, eſpecially when he conjures the powers below in beautiful trochaics,

By the hero's armed ſhades
Glittering through the gloomy glades,
By the youths that dy'd for love
Wand'ring in the myrtle grove;

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* Ver. 480.

Theſe images are pictureſque and appropriated; and theſe are ſuch notes as might,

> Draw iron tears down Pluto's cheek *,
> And make hell grant what love did ſeek.

But the numbers that conclude this ſtanza are of ſo burleſque and ridiculous a kind, and have ſo much the air of a drinking ſong at a county election, that one is amazed and concerned to find them in a ſerious ode, and in an ode of a writer eminently ſkilled, in general, in accommodating his ſounds to his ſentiments.

> Thus ſong could prevail
> O'er death and o'er hell,
> A conqueſt how hard and how glorious!
> Tho' fate had faſt bound her
> With Styx nine times round her,
> Yet muſic and love were victorious.

One would imagine that John Dennis, or ſome hero of the Dunciad, had been here attempting to traveſty this deſcription of the

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* Milton's Il Penſeroſo.

reſtora-

reſtoration of Eurydice to life. It is obſervable, that this is the very meaſure Addiſon thought was proper to uſe in the comic character of Sir Truſty; by the introduction of which he has ſo ſtrangely debaſed and degraded his opera of Roſamond.

How unhappy is he
That is ty'd to a ſhe,
And fam'd for his wit and his beauty;
For of us pretty fellows,
Our wives are ſo jealous,
They ne'er have enough of our duty *.

Theſe numbers therefore, according to Addiſon's ear, conveyed a low and ludicrous idea, inſtead of being expreſſive of triumph and exaltation, the images here intended to be impreſſed by POPE.

VIRGIL is again imitated throughout the ſixth ſtanza, which deſcribes the behaviour of Orpheus on the ſecond loſs of Eurydice.

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* Act I. Scene II. See alſo, Scene IV. Act I. A ſong of Grideline and Truſty. Act III. Scene IV.

I wiſh POPE had inſerted that ſtriking circumſtance, ſo ſtrongly imagined, of a certain melancholy murmur, or rather diſmal ſhriek, that was heard all around the lakes of Avernus, the moment Orpheus looked back on his wife;

> — Terque fragor ſtagnis auditus Avernis *.

And as proſopopeias are a great beauty in lyric poetry, ſurely he ſhould not have omitted thoſe natural and pathetic exclamations of Eurydice, the moment ſhe was ſnatched back, and which ſhe uttered as ſhe was gradually ſinking to the ſhades, eſpecially where ſhe movingly takes her laſt adieu,

> Jamque vale! — — —

And adds, that ſhe is now ſurrounded with a vaſt darkneſs, "feror ingenti circumdata "nocte," and in vain ſtretching out her feeble arms towards him,

> Invalidaſque tibi tendens, heu! non tua, palmas †.

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* Georgic. iv. 493.

† Ver. 498.

This lively and pathetic attitude would have made a ſtriking picture under the hands of Pope. The reader, I preſume, feels the effect of the judicious placing in the verſe, *heu! non tua*, and of its repetition after *tibi*. The places in which Orpheus, according to Pope, made his lamentations are not ſo wild, ſo ſavage and diſmal, as thoſe mentioned by Virgil; to introduce him "beſide the falls of "fountains," conveys not ſuch an image of deſolation and deſpair, as the caverns on the banks of Strymon and Tanais, the Hyperborean deſarts, and the Riphæan ſolitudes. And to ſay of Hebrus, only, that it "rolls "in meanders," is flat and frigid, and does not heighten the melancholy of the place. There is an antitheſis in the ſucceeding lines, "he *glows* amid Rhodope's *ſnows*," which I hope the poet did not intend, as it would be a trivial and puerile conceit. The death of Orpheus is expreſſed with a beautiful brevity and abruptneſs, ſuitable to the nature of the ode;

Hark! Hæmus reſounds with the Bacchanals cries,
Ah! ſee he dies!
Yet even in death Eurydice he *ſung*.

Inſtead of *ſung*, Virgil ſays *vocabat*, which is more natural and tender; and Virgil adds a very moving epithet, that he called *miſeram* Eurydicen. I am ſenſible POPE never intended an exact tranſlation of the paſſages of the Georgics here alleged; I only hint, that, in my humble judgment, he has omitted ſome of the moſt ſtriking incidents in the ſtory. I have lately ſeen a manuſcript ode, entitled, "On the Uſe and Abuſe of Poetry," in which Orpheus is conſidered in another, and a higher light, according to ancient mythology, as the firſt legiſlator and civilizer of mankind. I ſhall here inſert a ſtanza of it, containing part of what relates to this ſubject.

ANTISTROPHE II.

Such was wiſe Orpheus' moral ſong,
The lonely cliffs and caves among;
From hollow oak, or mountain-den,
He drew the naked, gazing men,

Or where in turf-built ſheds, or ruſhy bowers,
They ſhiver'd in cold wintry ſhowers,
Or ſunk in heapy ſnows;
Then ſudden, while his melting muſic ſtole
With powerful magic o'er each ſoftening ſoul,
Society, and law, and ſacred order roſe.

EPODE II.

Father of peace and arts! he firſt the city built;
No more the neighbour's blood was by his neighbour ſpilt;
He taught to till, and ſeparate the lands;
He fix'd the roving youths in Hymen's myrtle bands;
Whence dear domeſtic life began,
And all the charities that ſoften'd man:
The babes that in their fathers faces ſmil'd;
With liſping blandiſhments their rage beguil'd,
And tender thoughts inſpir'd—&c.

I am not permitted to tranſcribe any more, and therefore return to Pope again.

The beginning of the laſt ſtanza of the ode here examined, ſeems to be a repetition of the ſubject of the ſecond, the power of muſic over the paſſions, which may perhaps be reckoned a blameable tautology; eſpecially as theſe lines,

Muſic the fierceſt grief can charm,
And Fate's ſevereſt rage diſarm;
Muſic can ſoften pain to eaſe,
And make deſpair and madneſs pleaſe;

are inferior, I am afraid, to the former on the ſame ſubjects, which contain beautiful and poetical perſonifications;

Melancholy lifts her head,
Morpheus rouſes from his bed,
Sloth unfolds her arms and wakes,
Liſtning Envy drops her ſnakes;
Inteſtine war no more our paſſions wage,
And giddy factions hear away their rage.

It is obſervable, that this Ode of Pope, and the Alexander's Feaſt of Dryden, conclude with an epigram of four lines; a ſpecies of wit as flagrantly unſuitable to the dignity, and as foreign to the nature, of the lyric, as it is of the epic muſe.

It is to be regretted, that Mr. Handel has not ſet to muſic the former, as well as the latter, of theſe celebrated odes, in which he has diſplayed the combined powers of verſe and voice, to a wonderful degree. No poem indeed, affords ſo much various matter for a compoſer to work upon; as Dryden has here introduced and expreſſed all the greater paſſions, and as the tranſitions from one to the other are ſudden and impetuous. Of which we feel the effects, in the pathetic deſcription of the fall of Darius, that immediately ſucceeds the joyous praiſes of Bacchus. The ſymphony, and air particularly, that accompanies the four words, "fallen, fallen, "fallen, fallen," is ſtrangely moving*, and conſiſts

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* The mention of this pathetic air, reminds me of a ſtory of the celebrated Lully, who having been one day accuſed of never ſetting any thing to muſic, but the languid verſes of Quinault, was immediately animated with the reproach, and as it were ſeized with a kind of enthuſiaſm; he ran inſtantly to his harpſichord, and ſtriking a few cords, ſung in recitative theſe four lines in the Iphigenia of Racine, which are full of the ſtrongeſt imagery, and are therefore much more difficult to expreſs in muſic, than verſes of mere ſentiment,

> Un prêtre environné d' une foule cruelle
> Portera ſur ma fille une main criminelle,
> Dechirera ſon ſein, et d' un œil curieux,
> Dans ſon cœur palpitant conſultera les dieux.

One of the company has often declared that they all thought themſelves preſent at this dreadful ſpectacle, and that the notes with conſiſts of a few ſimple and touching notes, without any of thoſe intricate variations, and affected diviſions, into which, in compliance with a vicious and vulgar taſte, this great maſter hath ſometimes deſcended. Even this piece of Handel, ſo excellent on the whole, is not free from one or two blemiſhes of this ſort, particularly in the air, "With "raviſhed ears, &c."

THE moderns have perhaps practiſed no ſpecies of poetry with ſo little ſucceſs, and with ſuch indiſputable inferiority to the ancients, as the ODE; which ſeems owing to the harſhneſs and untuneableneſs of modern languages, abounding in monoſyllables, and

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with which Lully accompanied theſe words, erected the hair of their heads with horror.

The opinion of Boileau concerning muſic is remarkable; he aſſerts, qu'on ne peut jamais faire un bon opera; parceque la muſique ne ſauroit narrer; que les paſſions n'y peuvent etre peinte dans toute l'etenduë qu'elles demandent; que d'ailleurs elle ne ſauroit ſouvent mettre en chant les expreſſions vraiment ſublimes et courageuſes.

crowded with conſonants. This particularly is the caſe of the Engliſh, whoſe original is Teutonic, and which therefore, is not ſo muſical as the Italian, the Spaniſh, or even the French, as not having ſo great a quantity of words derived from the Latin. But the Latin language itſelf, as well as all others, muſt yield to the unparallelled ſweetneſs and copiouſneſs of the Greek. Tantò eſt ſermo græcus latino jucundior, ſays Quintilian, ut noſtri poetæ, quoties dulce carmen eſſe voluerunt, illorum id nominibus exornent *." What line, even in the Italian poets, is ſo ſoft and mellifluous, as †

Αλλ' αιει ζεφύροιο λιγυπνειοντας αῆτας ?

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* He gives ſome inſtances that are curious and worth attention. "Quid quod pleraque nos illa quaſi mugiente literâ cludimus M, quâ nullum Græcè verbum cadit? At illi N jucundam et in fine præcipuè quaſi tinnientem, illius loco ponunt, quæ eſt apud nos rariſſimè in clauſulis. Quid quod ſyllabæ noſtræ in B literam et D innituntur? adeò aſperè, ut plerique non antiquiſſimorum quidem, ſed tamen veterum mollire tentaverint, non ſolum *averſa* pro *adverſis* dicendo, ſed et in præpoſitione B literæ abſonam et ipſam S ſubjiciendo." Apply theſe obſervations with proper alterations to the Engliſh tongue. Quintil. l. xii. c. 10.

† Odyſ. iv. 565.

Or as, in the tender Bion,

Αἰάζω τὸν Ἄδωνιν, ἀπώλετο καλὸς Ἄδωνις,

to inſtance in no more? If we caſt a tranſient view over the moſt celebrated of the modern lyrics, we may obſerve, that the ſtanza of * Petrarch, which has been adopted by all his ſucceſſors, diſpleaſes the ear, by its tedious uniformity, and by the number of identical cadences. And indeed to ſpeak truth, there appears to be little valu-

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* Petrarch was taught the Greek language, which was at that time unknown in Italy, by Barlaham, a learned monk of Calabria; which country having been a colony of Greeks, retained ſome traces of their tongue. Soon afterwards Boccace learned Greek of Leontius Pilatus, of Theſſalonica, who explained Homer to him for three years; after which time Boccace founded a lecture for the explanation of the Iliad and Odyſſey. After Boccace's death, the republic of Florence invited Emanuel Chryſoloras, a nobleman of Conſtantinople, to open an academy for teaching the Greek language about the year 1394. This Chryſoloras came into England, to ſollicit Richard II. to enter into an alliance againſt the Turks. Among his ſcholars were Leonardus Aretinus, Paulus Vergerius, Guarinus, Leonicenus, Typhernas, Philelphus, and other famous writers. Petrarch died in the year 1374. Boccace in 1376. Chaucer in 1400. The Greek tongue was brought into England by William Grocyn. He was fellow of New College in Oxford, and died about the year 1520.

able in Petrarch, except the purity of his diction. His ſentiments, even of love, are metaphyſical and far fetched, neither is there much variety in his ſubjects, or fancy in his method of treating them. Metaſtaſio is a much better lyric poet. When Boileau attempted an ode, he exhibited a glaring proof, of what will be more fully inſiſted on in the courſe of this Eſſay, that the writer, whoſe grand chracteriſtical talent is ſatiric or moral poetry, will never ſucceed, with equal merit, in the higher branches of his art. In his ode on the taking Namur, are inſtances of the a * BOMBASTIC, of the PROSAIC, and of the PUERILE. And it is no ſmall confirmation of the ruling paſſion of this author, that he could not conclude his

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* An inſtance of the FIRST, is to be found in the third ſtanza. Of the SECOND, in the ninth ſtanza,

> Qui domta Lille, Coutrai,
> Gand, la ſuperbe Eſpagnole,
> Saint Omer, Bezançon, Dole,
> Ypres, Maſtricht, et Cambrai.

Of the THIRD ſort, is, his making a ſtar or comet, fatal to his enemies, of the white feather, which the king uſually wore in his hat.

ode, but with a ſevere ſtroke on his old antagoniſt Perrault, though the majeſty of this ſpecies of compoſitions are ſo much injured, by deſcending to perſonal ſatire. The name of Malherbe is reſpectable, as he was the firſt reformer of the French poeſy, and the firſt who gave his countrymen any idea of a legitimate ode, though his own pieces have hardly any thing but harmony to recommend them. The Odes of la Motte, are fuller of delicate ſentiment, and philoſophical reflection, than of imagery, figures, and poetry. There are particular ſtanzas eminently good, but not one entire ode. Some of Rouſſeau, particularly that to Fortune, and ſome of his pſalms; and one or two of Voltaire, particularly, to the king of Pruſſia, on his acceſſion to the throne, and on Meaupertuis's travels to the north, to meaſure the degrees of the meridian towards the equator, ſeem to ariſe above that correct mediocrity, which diſtinguiſhes the lyric poetry of the French. In this ode of Voltaire, we find a proſopopeia of Americus, and afterwards a ſpeech of Newton, on the deſign of this traveller and his companions, that approach to the ſublime,

> Comme ils parloient ainſi, Newton dans l'empirée,
> Newton les regardoit, et du ciel entr'ouvert
> Confirmez, diſoit il, a la terre eclairée
> Ce que j'ai decouvert.

I hope I ſhall not tranſgreſs a very ſenſible obſervation of Pope, who would have a true critic be

> Still pleas'd to praiſe, yet not afraid to blame,

if I ſhould ſay, we have lately ſeen two or three lyric pieces, ſuperiour to any he has * left us; I mean an Ode on Lyric Poetry, and another to lord Huntingdon, by Dr. Akenſide; and a Chorus of Britiſh Bards, by Mr. Gilbert Weſt, at the end of the Inſtitution of the Order of the Garter. Both theſe are written with regular returns of the Strophe, Antiſtrophe, and Epode, which give a truly

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* When this paragraph was written, Mr. Gray's odes had not been publiſhed: it is not exaggeration to ſay, they are the moſt exquiſite pieces of *true poetry* in our language.

Pindaric variety to the numbers, that is wanting not only to the beſt French and Italian, but even to the beſt Latin odes. In the pieces here commended, the figures are ſtrong, and the tranſitions bold, and there is a juſt mixture of ſentiment and imagery; and particularly, they are animated with a noble ſpirit of liberty. I muſt refer the reader to the characters of Alcæus and of Milton in the two firſt, and to the ſtanza of Mr. Weſt's ode, on the barons procuring magna charta, which I ſhall inſert at length.

On yonder plain,
Along whoſe willow-fringed ſide
The ſilver-footed Naids, ſportive train,
Down the ſmooth Thames amid the cygnets glide,
I ſaw, when at thy reconciling word,
Injuſtice, anarchy, inteſtine jarr,
Deſpotic inſolence, the waſting ſword,
And all the brazen throats of civil war
Were huſh'd in peace; from this imperious throne
Hurl'd furious down,
Abaſh'd, diſmay'd,
Like a chas'd lion to the ſavage ſhade

Of his own foreſts fell Oppreſſion fled,
With vengeance brooding in his ſullen breaſt.
Then Juſtice fearleſs rais'd her decent head,
  Heal'd every grief, each wrong redreſt;
  While round her valiant ſquadrons ſtood,
  And bade her awful tongue demand,
  From vanquiſh'd John's reluctant hand,
The DEED OF FREEDOM purchas'd with their blood*.

THE next LYRIC compoſitions of POPE, are two choruſes inſerted in a very heavy tragedy altered from Shakeſpear by the duke of Buckingham; in which we ſee, that the moſt accurate obſervation of dramatic rules without genius is of no effect. Theſe choruſes are extremely elegant and harmonious; but are they not chargeable with the fault, which Ariſtotle imputes to many of Euripides, that they are foreign and adventitious to the ſubject, and contribute nothing towards the advancement of the main action? Whereas the chorus ought, "Μοριον ειναι του ὁλου, και συναγωνιζεσθαι †, to be a part or member of the one Whole, co-operate with it, and help to accelerate the intended event; as is conſtantly, adds the philoſopher, the practice of Sophocles. Whereas theſe reflections of Pope on the baneful influences of war, on the arts and learning, and on the univerſal power of love, ſeem to be too general, are not ſufficiently appropriated, do not riſe from the ſubject and occaſion, and might be inſerted with equal propriety in twenty other tragedies. This remark of Ariſtotle, though he does not himſelf produce any examples, may be verified from the following, among many others. In the Phœnicians of Euripides, they ſing a long and very beautiful, but ill placed, hymn to Mars; I ſpeak of that which begins ſo nobly,

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* Dodſley's Miſcellanies, vol. ii. pag. 152. See alſo in the ſame volume, an excellent ode of Mr, Cobb,

† Κεφ. ιη. περι ποιητικης.

> Ω πολυμοχθος Αρης, τι ποθ' αιματι
> Και θανατω κατεχη, Βρομιου παραμουσος εορταις *;

" O direful Mars! why art thou ſtill delight-
" ed with blood and with death, and why

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* Ver. 793.

"an enemy to the feaſts of Bacchus?" And a ſtill more glaring inſtance may be brought from the end of the third act of the Troades, in which the ſtory of Ganymede is introduced not very artificially *. To theſe may may be added that exquiſite ode in praiſe of Apollo, deſcriptive of his birth and victories, which we find in the Iphigenia in Tauris †.

On the other hand, the choruſes of Sophocles never deſert the ſubject of each particular drama, and all their ſentiments and reflections are drawn from the ſituation of the principal perſonage of the fable. Nay Sophocles hath artfully found a method of making thoſe poetical deſcriptions, with which the choruſes of the ancients abound, carry on the chief deſign of the piece; and has by theſe means accompliſhed what is a great difficulty in writing tragedy, has united poetry with propriety. In the ‡ Philoctetes

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* Ver. 795.

† Ver. 1235. et ſeq.

‡ The ſubject and ſcene of this tragedy, ſo romantic and uncommon, are highly pleaſing to the imagination. See particularly

tetes the chorus takes a natural occaſion, at verſe 694, to give a minute and moving picture of the ſolitary life of that unfortunate hero; and when afterwards at verſe 855, pain has totally exhauſted the ſtrength and ſpirits of Philoctetes, and it is neceſſary for the plot of the tragedy that he ſhould fall aſleep, it is then, that the chorus breaks out into an exquiſite ode to ſleep. As in the Antigone, with equal beauty and decorum in an addreſs to the god of love, at verſe 791 of that play. And thus laſtly, when the birth of Edipus is doubtful, and his parents unknown, the chorus ſuddenly exclaims, "Τις σε, τεκνον, τις σ' ετικτε των "μακραιωνων; &c. From which, O my ſon, "of the immortal gods, didſt thou ſpring? "Was it ſome nymph, a favourite of Pan "that

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ticularly his deſcription of his being left in this deſolate iſland, v. 280. His lamentation for the loſs of his bow, v. 1140. and alſo 1185. and his laſt adieu to the iſland, 1508. One may here obſerve by the way, that the acients thought bodily pains, and wounds, &c. proper objects to be repreſented on the ſtage. See alſo the Trachiniæ of Sophocles, and the lamentations of Hercules in it.

"that haunts the mountains; or ſome "daughter of Apollo, for this god loves "the remote rocks and caverns, who bore "you? Or was it Mercury who reigns in "Cyllene; or did Bacchus, *Θεος ναιων επ' "ακρων ορεων*, a god who dwells on the tops "of the mountains, beget you, on any of "the nymphs that poſſeſs Helicon, with "whom he frequently ſports?*"

THE judicious author of the Tragedy of Elfrida, hath given occaſion to a kind of controverſy among the more curious critics, concerning the utility of the chorus, which, after the model of the ancients, he hath endeavoured to revive. That the great Grecian maſters retained it only out of reſpect to its antiquity, and from no intrinſic valuableneſs or propriety of the thing, can ſcarcely be imagined. The ſentiments of the judicious Brumoy are moderate and rational, and ſeem to comprehend all that is neceſſary to be ſaid on this ſubject. "I know, ſays he, the chorus is attended with inconveniences. Sophocles had the addreſs to withdraw his chorus for a few moments, when their abſence was neceſſary, as in the Ajax. If the chorus therefore incommodes the poet, and puts him under difficulties, he muſt charge it ſolely to his own want of dexterity. What advantage, on the other hand, may he not reap, from a body of actors that fill the ſtage; that render more lively, ſtriking, and ſenſible, the continuity of the action, and give it the air of greater PROBABILITY? For it is not natural or conceivable, that a great and illuſtrious action, ſuch as a revolution in a ſtate, ſhould paſs without witneſſes. We perceive and feel a kind of void on the ſtage, on account of the abſence of the choruſes; and the ſucceſsful attempt of Racine, who adopted and revived the uſe of them in his ATHALIA and ESTHER, were ſufficient, one would imagine, to undeceive and convince us, of their importance, and utility. The ancients treated only of ſuch ſtories as were publicly tranſacted; now the baniſhment of the chorus has been the neceſſary conſequence of the cuſtom of the moderns, in taking for their Repreſentations all kinds of ſubjects, and in filling and overcharging the action with incidents and ſurpriſes. For how could theſe various crouded events and incidents, have been poſſibly introduced in a public place, expoſed to the view of courtiers and the people; while the generality of OUR tragedies turn out particular and private affairs, removed from the view and notice of all men? The Athenian ſpectators were ever accuſtomed to concern themſelves in all public affairs, and to be witneſſes and judges of them. The modern ſtage, by its diſuſe of the chorus, may perhaps have gained a great number of fine ſubjects for tragedy; yet, in return, it is burthened with confidents, it loſes the continuity of action, and is deprived of the magnificent ſpectacle that ſerves to ſupport that continuity, and which is, if I may be allowed the expreſſion, the accompagnient of the picture *.

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* Οιδπ. τύραν. 1118.

I THOUGHT it more equitable, as well as more convincing, to quote at large the words of this admirable critic, whoſe work is one of the moſt valuable that his elegant nation hath produced, than to adopt, as ſome have done with ſmall variations, his opinion, without acknowledging the debt. An apology would be neceſſary for this digreſſion, if it was not my profeſſed deſign in this Eſſay, to expatiate into ſuch occaſional diſquiſitions, as naturally ariſe from the ſubject; it has however kept us too long from ſurveying a valuable literary curioſity, I mean the earlieſt production of POPE, written when he was not twelve years old, his ODE ON SOLITUDE.

THE firſt ſketches of ſuch an artiſt ought highly to be prized. Different geniuſes unfold themſelves at different periods of life.

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* Le Theatre de Grecs. Tom. i. 104. and 214. and 198.

In ſome minds the ore is a long time in ripening. Not only inclination, but opportunity and encouragement, a proper ſubject, or a proper patron, influence the exertion or the ſuppreſſion of genius. Theſe ſtanzas on Solitude, are a ſtrong inſtance of that contemplative and moral turn, which was the diſtinguiſhing characteriſtic of our poet's mind. An ode of Cowley which he produced at the age of thirteen years, is of the ſame caſt, and perhaps not in the leaſt inferiour to this of POPE. The voluminous Lopez de Vega, is commonly, but I fear incredibly, reported by the Spaniards, to have compoſed verſes when he was * five years old; and Torquato Taſſo, the ſecond of the Italian poets, for that wonderful original Dante is the firſt, is ſaid to have recited poems and orations of his own writing, when he was ſeven. It is however certain, which is more extraordinary, that he produced his Rinaldo in his eighteenth year,

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* It is a certain fact, that S. Bononcini compoſed and performed an opera, when he was but nine years old.

no bad precurſor to the Gieruſalemma Liberata, and no ſmall effort of that genius, which was in due time to ſhew, how fine an epic poem the Italian language, notwithſtanding the vulgar imputation of effeminacy, was capable of ſupporting.

THOSE who are fond of biographical anecdotes, which are ſome of the moſt amuſive and inſtructive parts of hiſtory, will be perhaps pleaſed with the following particulars in the life of POPE. He frequently declared, that the time of his beginning to write verſes, was ſo very early in his life, that he could ſcarcely recall it to his memory. When he was yet a child, his father, who had been a merchant in London, and retired to Binfield with about twenty thouſand pounds, would frequently order him to make Engliſh verſes. It ſeems he was difficult to be pleaſed, and would make the lad correct them again and again. When at laſt he approved them, he took great pleaſure in peruſing them, and would ſay, "theſe are good RHYMES."

Theſe early praiſes of a tender and reſpected parent, co-operating with the natural inclination of the ſon, might poſſibly be the cauſes that fixed our young bard in a reſolution of becoming eminent in this art. He was taught to read very early by an aunt; and of his own indefatigable induſtry learned to write, by copying printed books, which he executed with great neatneſs and accuracy. When he was eight years old, he was put under the direction of one Taverner, a prieſt, who taught him the rudiments of the Latin and Greek tongues together. About this time he accidentally met with Ogilby's tranſlation of Homer, which, notwithſtanding the deadneſs and inſipidity of the verſification, arreſted his attention by the force of the ſtory. The Ovid of Sandys fell next in his way; and it is ſaid, that the raptures theſe tranſlations gave him were ſo ſtrong, that he ſpoke of them with pleaſure to the period of his life. About ten, being now at ſchool at Hyde-park-corner, whether he went from a popiſh ſeminary to Twiford, near Wincheſter, he was carried ſometimes to the playhouſe; and being ſtruck, we may imagine, with theatrical repreſentations, he turned the chief events into a kind of play, made up of a number of ſpeeches from Ogilby's tranſlation, connected with verſes of his own. He perſuaded the upper boys to act this piece, which, from its curioſity, one would have been glad to have beheld. The maſter's gardener repreſented the character of Ajax; and the actors were dreſſed after the pictures of his favourite Ogilby, far the beſt part of that book, as they were deſigned and engraved by artiſts of note. At twelve, he retired with his father into Windſor-Foreſt; and it was there he firſt peruſed the writings of Waller, of Spenſer, and of Dryden *. Spenſer is ſaid to have made a poet of Cowley; that Ogilby ſhould

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* I have been informed by an intimate friend of POPE, that when he was yet a meer boy, Dryden gave him a ſhilling, by way of encouragement, for a tranſlation he had made of the ſtory of Pyramus and Thiſbe from Ovid.

give our author his firſt poetic pleaſures, is a remarkable circumſtance. On the firſt ſight of Dryden he abandoned the reſt, having now found an author, whoſe caſt was exactly congenial with his own. His works therefore he ſtudied with equal pleaſure and attention: he placed them before his eyes as a model; of which more will be ſaid in the courſe of theſe papers. He copied not only his harmonious verſification, but the very turns of his periods. It was hence he was enabled to give to rhyme all the harmony of which it is capable.

About this time, when he was * fifteen years old, he began to write his ALCANDER, an epic poem, of which he himſelf ſpeaks with ſo much amiable frankneſs and ingenuity, in a paſſage reſtored to the excellent preface before his works. "I confeſs there was a time when I was in love with myſelf, and my firſt productions were the

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* Nec placet ante annos vates puer: omnia juſto
Tempore proveniant. — — — Vidæ Poet. l. 1.

children of ſelf-love upon innocence. I had made an epic poem, and panegyrics on all the princes of Europe, and I thought myſelf the greateſt genius that ever was. I cannot but regret theſe delightful viſions of my childhood, which, like the fine colours we ſee when our eyes are ſhut, are vaniſhed for ever." Atterbury had peruſed this early piece, and we may gather from one of his letters, adviſed him to burn it; though he adds, " I would have interceded for the firſt page, and put it, with your leave, among my curioſities." I have been credibly informed, that ſome of the anonymous verſes, quoted as examples of the *Art of Sinking in Poetry*, in the incomparable ſatire ſo called, were ſuch as our poet remembered from his own ALCANDER. So ſenſible of its own errors and imperfections is a mind truly great.

QUINTILIAN, whoſe knowledge of human nature was conſummate, has obſerved, that nothing quite correct and faultleſs, is to be expected in very early years, from a truly elevated genius: that a generous extravagance and exuberance are its proper marks, and that a premature exactneſs is a certain evidence of future flatneſs and ſterility. His words are incomparable, and worthy conſideration. [*] "Audeat hæc ætas plura, et INVENIAT, et inventis gaudeat, ſint licet illa non ſatis interim ſicca et ſevera. Facile remedium eſt ubertatis, ſterilia nullo labore vincuntur. Illa mihi in pueris natura nimium ſpei dabit, in quâ INGENIUM judicio præſumitur. Materiam eſſe primum volo vel abundantiorem, atque ultra quam oportet fuſam. Multum inde decoquent anni, multum ratio limabit, aliquid velut uſu ipſo deteretur, ſit modo unde excidi poſſit et quod exculpi: erit autem, ſi non ab initio tenuem laminam duxerimus, et quam cælatura altior rumpat—Quare mihi ne maturitas quidem ipſa feſtinet, nec muſta in lacu ſtatim auſtera ſint; ſic et annos ferent, et vetuſtate proficient." This is very ſtrong and maſculine ſenſe, expreſſed and enlivened by a train of metaphors, all of them elegant, and well preſerved. Whether theſe early productions of POPE, would not have appeared to Quintilian to be rather too finiſhed, correct, and pure, and what he would have inferred concerning them, is too delicate a ſubject for me to enlarge upon. Let me rather add an entertaining anecdote. When Guido and Domenichino had each of them painted a picture in the church of Saint Andrew, Annibal Carrache, their maſter, was preſſed to declare, which of his two pupils had excelled. The picture of Guido repreſented Saint Andrew on his knees before the croſs; that of Domenichino repreſented the flagellation of the ſame apoſtle. Both of them in their different kinds were capital pieces, and were painted in freſco, oppoſite each other, to eternize, as it were, their rivalſhip and contention. Guido, ſaid Carrache, has performed as a maſter, and Domenichino as a ſcholar. But, added he, the work of the ſcholar is more valuable than that of the maſter. In truth, one may perceive faults in the picture of Domenichino that Guido has avoided; but then there are noble ſtrokes, not to be found in that of his rival. It was eaſy to diſcern a genius that promiſed to produce beauties, to which the ſweet, the gentle, and the graceful Guido would never aſpire.

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[*] Lib. ii. Inſtit. Cap. 4. ad init.

THE laſt piece that belongs to this ſection, is the ODE entitled, THE DYING CHRISTIAN TO HIS SOUL, written in imitation of the well known ſonnet of Hadrian, addreſſed to his departing ſpirit; concerning which it was our author's judicious opinion, that the diminutive epithets with which it abounds, ſuch as Vagula, Blandula, were by no means expreſſions of levity and indifference, but rather of endearment, of tenderneſs and concern. This ode was written we find at the deſire of Steele; and our poet in a letter to him on that occaſion, ſays—“ You have it, as Cowley calls it, juſt warm from the brain; it came to me the firſt moment I waked this morning; yet you'll ſee, it was not ſo abſolutely inſpiration, but that I had in my head, not only the verſes of Hadrian, but the fine fragment of Sappho [*]."

It is poſſible however, that our author might have had another compoſition in his head, beſides thoſe he here refers to; for there is a cloſe and ſurpriſing reſemblance [†] between this ode of Pope, and one of an obſcure and forgotten rhymer of the age of Charles the ſecond, namely Thomas Flatman; from whoſe dunghill, as well as from the dregs of [‡] Craſhaw, of Carew, of Herbert, and others, (for it is well known he was a great reader of all thoſe poets) Pope has very judiciouſly collected gold. And the following ſtanza is perhaps the only valuable one Flatman * has produced.

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[*] In Longinus, ſect. 10. quoted by him, as a model of that Sublime which combines together many various and oppoſite paſſions and ſenſations, "Ινα μη εν τι παθος φαινηται, παθων δε ΣΥΝΟΔΟΣ."

[†] See The Adventurer, vol. II. 2d ed. p. 230. publiſhed 1753.

[‡] Craſhaw has very well tranſlated the dies iræ, to which tranſlation Roſcommon is much indebted, in his Poem on the day of Judgment.

When on my ſick bed I languiſh,
Full of ſorrow, full of anguiſh,
Fainting, gaſping, trembling, crying,
Panting, groaning, ſpeechleſs, dying;
Methinks I hear ſome gentle ſpirit ſay,
Be not fearful, come away!

The third and fourth lines are eminently good and pathetic, and the climax well preſerved; the very turn of them is cloſely copied by POPE; as is likewiſe the ſtriking circumſtance of the dying man's imagining he hears a voice calling him away;

Vital ſpark of heavenly flame
Quit, O quit, this mortal frame;
Trembling, hoping, lingring, flying,
O the pain, the bliſs of dying!
Hark! they whiſper! angels ſay,
Siſter ſpirit, come away!

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* Of whom ſays Lord Rocheſter,
Not that ſlow drudge in ſwift Pindaric ſtrains,
Flatman, who Cowley imitates with pains,
And rides a jaded muſe, whipt, with looſe reins.

I AM ſenſible of the difficulty of diſtinguiſhing reſemblances from thefts; and of what a late critic has urged, that a want of ſeeming originality ariſes frequently, not from a barrenneſs and timidity of genius, but from invincible neceſſity, and the nature of things: that the works of thoſe who profeſs an art, whoſe eſſence is imitation, muſt needs be ſtamped with a cloſe reſemblance to each other, ſince the objects material or animate, extraneous or internal, which they all imitate, lie equally open to the obſervation of all, and are perfectly ſimilar. Deſcriptions therefore that are faithful and juſt, MUST BE UNIFORM AND ALIKE; the firſt copier may be perhaps entitled to the praiſe of priority, but a ſucceeding one ought not certainly to be condemned for plagiariſm.

THESE general obſervations however true, do not, I think, extend to the caſe before us, becauſe not only the thoughts, but even the words are copied; and becauſe the images, eſpecially the laſt, are ſuch, as are not immediately impreſſed by ſenſible objects, and which therefore, on account of their SINGULARITY, did not lie in common for any poet to ſeize. Let us however moderate the matter, and ſay, what perhaps is the real fact, that POPE fell into the thoughts of Flatman unawares, and without deſign; and having formerly read him, imperceptibly adopted this paſſage, even without knowing that he had borrowed it. That this will frequently happen, is evident from the following curious particulars related by Menage, which, becauſe much has been ſaid of late on this head by many writers of criticiſm, I ſhall here inſert. "I have often heard M. Chapelain, and Mr. Dandilly declare, that they wrote the following line,

D' arbitres de la paix, de foudres de la guerre;

without knowing it was in Malherbe; and the moment I am making this remark, recollect that the ſame thing happened to M. Furetire. I have often heard Corneille declare,

clare, that he inſerted in his Polyeucte, two celebrated lines concerning fortune, without knowing they were the property of M. Godeau biſhop of Vence;

> Et comme elle a l' eclat du Verre
> Elle en a la fragilité——

Godeau had inſerted them in an ode to Cardinal Richlieu, fifteen years before Polyeucte was written. Porphyry, in a fragment of his book on Philology, quoted by Euſebius, in the tenth book of his *Evangelical Preparation*, makes mention of an author named Aretades, who compoſed an entire treatiſe on this ſort of reſemblances.—And St. Jerom relates, that his preceptor Donatus, explaining that ſenſible paſſage in Terence, "Nihil eſt dictum quod non ſit dictum prius," railed ſeverely at the ancients, for taking from him his beſt thoughts; "Pereant qui ante nos, noſtra dixerunt*."

MENAGE makes theſe obſervations on occaſion of a paſſage in the Poetics of Vida, intended to juſtify borrowing the thoughts and even expreſſions of others, which paſſage is very applicable to the ſubject before us:

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* Anti-Baillet, tom. ii. pag. 207.

Aſpice ut exuvias, veterumque inſignia, nobis
Aptemus; rerum accipimus nunc clara reperta,
Nunc ſeriem atq; animum verborum, verba quoque ipſa;
Nec pudet interdum alterius nos ore locutos *.

Menage adds, that he intended to compile a regular treatiſe on the thefts and imitations of the poets. As his reading was very extenſive, his work would probably have been very entertaining. For ſurely it is no trivial amuſement, to trace an applauded ſentiment or deſcription to its ſource, and to remark, with what † judgment and art it is adapted and inſerted; provided this be done with ſuch a ſpirit of modeſty and candour, as evidently ſhews, the critic intends merely to gratify curioſity, and not to indulge envy, malignity, and a petulant deſire of dethron-

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* Lib. iii. v. 255.

† Dryden ſays prettily of Ben. Jonſon's many imitations of the ancients, " You *track* him every where in their SNOW."

ing eſtabliſhed[*] reputations. Thus for inſtance, ſays the Rambler, " It can ſcarcely be doubted, that in the firſt of the following paſſages POPE remembered OVID, and that in the ſecond[†] he copied CRASHAW, becauſe there is a concurrence of more reſemblances, than can be imagined to have happened by chance.

Sæpe pater dixit, ſtudium quid inutile tentas?
  Mæonides nullas ipſe reliquit opes ——
Sponte ſuâ carmen numeros veniebat ad aptos,
  Et quod conabar ſcribere, verſus erat. OVID.

I left no calling for this idle trade,
No duty broke, no father diſobey'd;
While yet a child, e'er yet a fool to fame,
I liſp'd in numbers, for the numbers came. POPE.

—— This plain floor,
Believe me reader, can ſay more
Than many a braver marble can,
Here lies a truly honeſt man. CRASHAW.

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[*] See the fruitleſs and impudent attack of Lauder on Milton.

[†] The Works of Cardinal Bembo, and of Caſa, of Annibal Caro, and Taſſo himſelf, are full of entire lines taken from Dante and Petrarch.

This modeſt ſtone, what few vain marbles can,
May truly ſay, " here lies an honeſt man." Pope[*].

Two other critics have alſo remarked ſome farther remarkable coincidencies of Pope's thought and expreſſions, with thoſe of other writers, which are here inſerted, as they cannot fail of entertaining the curious.

Pride, malice, folly, againſt Dryden roſe
In various ſhapes of parſons, critics, beaus. Pope.

L'ignorance, et l' erreur a ſes naiſſantes pieces [†],
En habits de marquis, en robes de comteſſes,
Venoient pour diffamer ſon chef d'oeuvre nouveau.
Boileau.

Superior beings when of late they ſaw
A mortal man unfold all nature's law;
Admir'd ſuch wiſdom in an earthly ſhape,
And ſhew'd a Newton as we ſhew an ape. Pope.

Simia cœlicolum riſuſque jocuſque deorum eſt,
Tunc homo, quum temerè ingenio confidit, et audet
Abdita naturæ ſcrutari, arcanaque divum.
Palingenius.

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[*] Rambler, No. 143.

[†] Of Moliere.

— — — Happily to ſteer
From grave to gay, from lively to ſevere. POPE.

— — — D' une voix legere
Paſſer du grave au doux, du plaiſant au ſevere.
BOILEAU.

The concluſion of the epitaph on Gay, where he obſerves, that his honour conſiſts not in being entombed among kings and heroes,

But that the worthy and the good may ſay,
Striking their penſive boſoms, *here* lies GAY,

is adopted from an old Latin elegy on the death of prince Henry. This conceit of his friend's being enſhrined in the hearts of the virtuous, is, by the way, one of the moſt forced and far-fetched, that POPE has fallen into *.

JONSON, as another critic has remarked, wrote an elegy on the lady Anne Pawlet, Marchioneſs of Winton; the beginning of which POPE ſeems to have thought of, when he wrote his verſes, to the memory of an unfortunate lady. Jonſon begins his elegy,

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* See the Adventurer, No. 63, where other borrowed paſſages are pointed out, particularly from Paſcal, Charron, and Wooleſton.

> What gentle ghoſt, beſprent with April dew,
> Hayles me ſo ſolemnly to yonder yew?
> And beckoning woes me ——[*]

In which ſtrain POPE beautifully breaks out,

> What beck'ning ghoſt along the moonlight ſhade,
> Invites my ſteps, and points to yonder glade?
> 'Tis ſhe! ——

As Jonſon now lies before me, I may perhaps be pardoned for pointing out another paſſage in him, which POPE probably remembered, when he wrote the following:

> From ſhelves to ſhelves, ſee greedy Vulcan roll,
> And lick up all their phyſic of the ſoul[†];

Thus Jonſon, ſpeaking of a parcel of books,

> Theſe, hadſt thou pleas'd either to dine or ſup,
> Had made a meale for Vulcan to lick up[‡].

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[*] In the Underwood.

[†] Dunciad.

[‡] See OBSERVATIONS on the FAERIE QUEEN of Spenſer, by Thomas Warton, ſect. vii. p. 166.

I SHOULD be ſenſibly touched at the in-
irious imputation of ſo ungenerous, and in-
eed impotent a deſign, as that of attempt-
g to diminiſh, or ſully the reputation of
valuable a writer as POPE, by the moſt
ſtant hint, or accuſation of his being a
agiary; a writer to whom the Engliſh
eſy, and the Engliſh language is everlaſt-
gly indebted. But we may ſay of his imi-
tions, what his poetical father Dryden ſaid
another, who deſerved not ſuch a panegy-
c ſo juſtly as our author: "HE INVADES
AUTHORS LIKE A MONARCH, AND WHAT
WOULD BE THEFT IN OTHER POETS, IS
ONLY VICTORY IN HIM *." For indeed
e never works on the ſame ſubject with
nother, without heightening the piece
ith more maſterly ſtrokes, and a more art-
l pencil. Thoſe who flattered themſelves,
at they ſhould diminiſh the reputation of
oileau, by printing, in the manner of a
ommentary at the bottom of each page of

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* On Dram. poeſy, p. 61.

his works, the many lines he has borrowed from Horace and Juvenal, were groſsly deceived. The verſes of the ancients, which this poet hath turned into French with ſo much addreſs, and which he hath happily made ſo homogeneous, and of a piece with the reſt of the work, that every thing ſeems to have been conceived in a continued train of thought, by the very ſame perſon, confer as much honour on M. Deſpreaux, as the verſes which are purely his own. The original turn which he gives to his tranſlations, the boldneſs of his expreſſions, ſo little forced and unnatural, that they ſeem to be born, as it were, with his thoughts, diſplay almoſt as much invention, as the firſt production of a thought entirely new. This induced La Bruyere to ſay, "que "Deſpreaux paroiſſoit creer les penſees "d' autrui." Both he and Pope might have anſwered their * accuſers, in the words with which Virgil is ſaid to have repli-

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* The Jeſuits that wrote the journals of Trevoux ſtrongly object plagiariſm to Boileau.

ed, to thoſe who accuſed him of borrowing all that was valuable in his Æneid from Homer; "CUR NON ILLI QUOQUE EADEM FURTA TENTARENT? VERUM INTELLECTUROS, FACILIUS ESSE HERCULI CLAVUM, QUAM HOMERO VERSUM, SURRIPERE †."

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† Donat. in Vit. Virgil.

271891

SECT. III.

Of the ESSAY *on Criticiſm.*

WE are now arrived at a poem of that ſpecies, for which our author's genius was particularly turned, the DIDACTIC and the MORAL; it is therefore, as might be expected, a maſter-piece in its kind. I have been ſometimes inclined to think, that the praiſes Addiſon has beſtowed on it, were a little partial and invidious. "The obſerva-" tions, ſays he, follow one another, like "those in Horace's Art of Poetry, without "that methodical regularity which would "have been requiſite in a proſe writer*." It is however certain, that the poem before us is by no means deſtitute of a juſt integrity, and a lucid order: each of the precepts and remarks naturally introduce the ſucceeding ones, ſo as to form an entire whole. The ingenious Mr. Hurd, hath alſo uſefully ſhewn, that Horace obſerved a ſtrict method, and unity of deſign, in his epiſtle to the Piſones, and that altho' the connexions are delicately fine, and almoſt imperceptible, like the ſecret hinges of a well-wrought box, yet they artfully and cloſely unite each part together, and give coherence, uniformity, and beauty to the work. The Spectator adds; "The "obſervations in this eſſay are *ſome* of them "*uncommon*:" there is, I fear, a ſmall mixture of ill-nature in theſe words; for this Essay, tho' on a beaten ſubject, abounds in many new remarks, and original rules, as well as in many happy and beautiful illuſtrations, and applications, of the old ones. We are indeed amazed to find ſuch a knowledge of the world, ſuch a maturity of judgment, and ſuch a penetration into human nature, as are here diſplayed, in ſo very young a writer as was Pope, when he produced this Essay; for he was not twenty years old. Correctneſs and a juſt taſte, are uſually not attained but by long practice and experience in any art; but a clear head, and ſtrong ſenſe were the characteriſtical qualities of our author; and every man ſooneſt diſplays his radical excellencies. If his predominant talent be warmth and vigor of imagination, it will break out in fanciful and luxuriant deſcriptions, the colouring of which will perhaps be too rich and glowing. If his chief force lies in the underſtanding rather than in the imagination, it will ſoon appear by ſolid and manly obſervations on life or learning, expreſſed in a more chaſt and ſubdued ſtyle. The former will frequently be hurried into obſcurity or turgidity, and a falſe grandeur of diction; the latter will ſeldom hazard a figure, whoſe uſage is not already eſtabliſhed, or an image beyond common life; will always be preſpicuous if not elevated; will never diſguſt, if not tranſport, his readers; will avoid the groſſer faults, if not arrive at the greater beauties of compoſition; The "eloquentiæ genus," for which he will be diſtinguiſhed, will not be the "plenum et erectum, et audax, et præcelſum," but the "preſſum, et mite, et limatum*." In the earlieſt letters of POPE to Wycherley, to Walſh, and Cromwell, we find many admirable and acute judgments of men and books, and an intimate acquaintance not only with ſome of the beſt Greek and Roman, particularly the latter, but the moſt celebrated of the French and Italian claſſics.

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* Spectator, No. 253.

DU BOS † fixes the period of time, at which, generally ſpeaking, the poets and the painters have arrived at as high a pitch of perfection, as their geniuſes will permit, to be the age of thirty years, or a few years more or leſs. Virgil was near thirty when he compoſed his firſt Eclogue. Horace was a grown man when he began to be talked of at Rome as a poet, having been formerly engaged in a buſy military life. Racine was about the ſame age when his ANDROMACHE, which may be regarded as has firſt good tragedy, was played. Corneille was more than thirty when his CID appeared. Deſpreaux was full thirty when he publiſhed his ſatires, ſuch as we now have them. Moliere was full forty when he wrote the firſt of thoſe comedies, on which his reputation is founded. But to excel in this ſpecies of compoſition, it was not ſufficient for Moliere to be only a great poet; it was rather neceſſary for him to gain a thorough knowledge of men and the world, which is ſeldom attained ſo early in life; but without which, the beſt poet would be able to write but very indifferent comedies. Congreve however was but nineteen when he wrote his Old Bachelor. Raphäel was about thirty years old when he diſplayed the beauty and ſublimity of his genius in the Vatican: for it is there we behold the firſt of his works, that are worthy the great name he at preſent ſo deſervedly poſſeſſes. When Shakeſpear wrote his LEAR, Milton his PARADISE LOST, Spenſer his FAIRY QUEEN, and Dryden his MUSIC ODE, they had all exceeded the middle age of man.

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* Quintil. l. xi. c. 1.

† Sect. x. 2.

FROM this ſhort review it appears, that few poets ripened ſo early as POPE; who ſeems literally and ſtrictly to have fulfilled the precept of Horace in each of its circumſtances;

> Multa tulit, fecitque PUER;

he was laborious and indefatigable in his purſuits of learning;

> — — — Sudavit et alſit;

and above all, what is of the greateſt conſequence in preſerving each faculty of the mind in due vigour,

> Abſtinuit venere et vino. ——

Theſe are the two temptations to which a youthful bard is principally ſubject, and into whoſe ſnares he generally falls. If the imagination be lively, the paſſions will be ſtrong, True genius ſeldom reſides in a cold and phlegmatic conſtitution. The ſame temperament, and the ſame ſenſibility that makes a poet or a painter, will be apt to make a man a lover and a debauchee. POPE was happily ſecured from theſe common failings,

ings, the bane of ſo many others, by the weakneſs and delicacy of his body, and the bad ſtate of his health. The ſenſual vices were too violent for ſo tender a frame; he never deviated into a courſe of intemperance and diſſipation. May I add, that even his bodily make was of uſe to him as a writer; for one who was acquainted with the heart of man, and the ſecret ſprings of our actions, has obſerved with great penetration; "* It is good to conſider deformity, not as a ſigne, which is more deceivable, but as a cauſe, which ſeldom faileth of the effect. Whoſoever hath any thing fixed in his perſon, that doth induce contempt, hath alſo a perpetual ſpur in himſelfe, to reſcue and deliver himſelf from ſcorne." I do not think it improbable, that this circumſtance might animate our poet, to double his diligence to make himſelf diſtinguiſhed; and hope I ſhall not be accuſed, by thoſe who have a knowledge of human nature, of aſſigning his deſire of excellence to a motive too mean and ſordid, as well as too weak and inefficacious, to operate ſuch an effect.

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* Bacon's Eſſays. xliv.

What crops of wit and honeſty appear,
From ſpleen, from obſtinacy, hate or fear!
See anger, zeal and fortitude ſupply,
Ev'n avarice, prudence; ſloth, philoſophy;
Nor virtue male or female can we name,
But what will grow on pride or grow on ſhame [*].

IT was another circumſtance equally propitious to the ſtudies of POPE, in this early part of his life, that he inherited a fortune that was a decent competence, and ſufficient to ſupply the ſmall expences, which both by conſtitution and reflection he required. He had no occaſion to diſtract his thoughts by being ſollicitous, "de lodice paranda;" he needed not to wait,

— Pour diner, le ſucces d'un ſonnet [†].

His father retired from buſineſs, at the revolution, to a little convenient box, at Binfield, near Oakingham, in Berkſhire [‡]; and having converted his effects into money, is ſaid to have brought with him into the country almoſt twenty thouſand pounds. As he was a papiſt he could not purchaſe, nor put his money to intereſt on real ſecurity; and as he adhered to the intereſts of king James, he made a point of conſcience not to lend it to the new government;

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[*] Eſſay on Man, ep. ii. v. 185. [†] Boileau, Art Poet. c. 4.

[‡] See WORKS, vol. iv. 212.

> For right hereditary tax'd and fin'd,
> He ſtuck to poverty with peace of mind:

he therefore kept this ſum in his cheſt, and lived upon the principal; till by that time his ſon came to the ſucceſſion, a great part of it was conſumed. There was however enough left to ſupply the occaſions of our author*, and to keep him from the two moſt deſtructive enemies to a young genius, want and dependence. "I can eaſily conceive, ſays a late moraliſt, that a mind occupied and overwhelmed with the weight and immenſity of its own conceptions, *glancing* with aſtoniſhing rapidity *from heaven to earth, and from earth to heaven*, cannot willingly ſubmit to the dull drudgery, of examining the juſtneſs and accuracy of a butcher's bill. To deſcend from the wideſt and comprehenſive views of nature, and weigh out hops for a brewing, muſt be invincibly diſguſting to a true genius; to be able to build imaginary palaces of the moſt exquiſite architecture, but yet not to pay a carpenter's bill, is a cutting mortification and diſgrace *."

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* He afterwards acquired a conſiderable fortune by his tranſlation of the Iliad, which was publiſhed for his own benefit, by a ſubſcription ſo large, that it does honour to this Kingdom. Mr. Warburton informs us, that he ſold it to Lintot the bookſeller, on the following terms; twelve hundred pounds paid down, and all the books for his ſubſcribers. The Odyſſey was publiſhed in the ſame manner, and ſold on the ſame conditions, except only, that inſtead of twelve, he had but ſix hundred pounds. He was aſſiſted in this latter work, by Broome and Fenton, to the firſt of whom he gave ſix hundred pounds, and to the latter, three hundred. This tranſlation has proved a good eſtate to the bookſeller.

On the other hand, opulence, and high ſtation would be equally pernicious and unfavourable to a young genius; as they would almoſt unavoidably embarraſs and immerſe him, in the cares, the pleaſures, the indolence, and the diſſipation, that accompany abundance. And perhaps the fortune moſt truly deſirable, and the ſituation moſt preciſely proper for a young poet, are marked out in that celebrated ſaying of Charles the ninth of France; " Equi et poetæ ALENDI ſunt, non SAGINANDI."—Poets and horſes are to be *fed*, and not *fattened*.

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* The Adventurer, No. 50.

THE ESSAY ON CRITICISM, which occaſioned the introduction of theſe reflections, was firſt, I am well informed, written in proſe, according to the precept of Vida, and the practice of Racine *.

> Quinetiam, prius effigiem formare, SOLUTIS,
> Totiuſque operis ſimulacrum fingere, verbis,
> Proderit; atque omnes ex ordine nectere partes,
> Et feriem rerum, et certos ſibi ponere fines,
> Per quos tuta regens veſtigia tendere pergas †.

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* The younger Racine, in the life of his father, informs us, that he uſed to ſay, he dared not touch any of the ſubjects which Sophocles had handled, and abſtained from imitating them from his great veneration of the original. And that this was the reaſon why he rather imitated Euripides than Sophocles; as in the Phædra, Andromache, Iphigenia.

† Poetic. lib. i. ver. 75.

When Racine had fixed on a ſubject for a play, he wrote down in plain proſe, not only the ſubject of each of the five acts, but of every ſcene and every ſpeech; ſo that he could take a view of the whole at once, and ſee whether every part cohered, and co-operated to produce the intended event: when his matter was thus regularly diſpoſed, he was uſed to ſay, "My Tragedy is finiſhed."

I NOW propoſe to make ſome obſervations on, and illuſtrations of, ſuch paſſages and precepts in this ESSAY, as, on account of their utility, novelty, or elegance, deſerve particular attention; and perhaps I may take the freedom to hint at a few imperfections, in this SENSIBLE performance. I ſhall cite the paſſages in the natural order, in which they ſucceſſively occur.

1. In poets as true genius is but rare[*].

IT is indeed ſo extremely rare, that no country in the ſucceſſion of many ages has produced above three or four perſons that deſerve the title. The "man of rhymes" may be eaſily found; but the genuine poet, of a lively plaſtic imagination, the true MAKER or CREATOR, is ſo uncommon a prodigy, that one is almoſt tempted to ſubſcribe to the opinion of Sir William Temple, where he ſays, "That of all the numbers of mankind, that live within the compaſs of a thouſand years, for one man that is born capable of making a great poet, there may be a thouſand born capable of making as great generals, or miniſters of ſtate, as the moſt renowned in ſtory [*]." There are indeed more cauſes required to concur to the formation of the former, than of the latter; which neceſſarily render it's production more difficult.

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[*] Ver. 11.

2. True taſte as ſeldom is the critic's ſhare [†].

LA BRUYERE ſays very ſenſibly, I will allow the good writers are ſcarce enough;

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[*] Miſcell. Eſſay iv. part 2.

[†] Ver. 12.

but th[illegible] I aſk, where are the people that know how to read?

> 3. Let ſuch teach others who themſelves excel,
> And cenſure freely who have written well *.

It is ſomewhere remarked by Dryden, I think, that none but a poet is qualified to judge of a poet. The maxim is however contradicted by experience. Ariſtotle is ſaid indeed to have written one ode; but neither Boſſu nor Hurd are poets. The penetrating author of the Reflections on Poetry, Painting, and Muſic, will for ever be read with delight, and with profit, by all ingenious artiſts; nevertheleſs, ſays Voltaire, he did not underſtand muſic, could never make verſes, and was not poſſeſſed of a ſingle picture; but he had read, ſeen, heard, and reflected a great deal †. And lord Shafteſbury ſpeaks with ſome indignation on this ſubject; "If a muſician performs his part well in the hardeſt ſymphonies, he muſt neceſſarily know the

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* Ver. 15.

† Louis XIV. p. 354.

notes, and underſtand the rules of h[illegible]rmony and muſic. But muſt a man, therefore, who has an ear, and has ſtudied the rules of muſic, of neceſſity, have a voice or hand? Can no one poſſibly judge a *fiddle*, but who is himſelf a fiddler? Can no one judge a picture, but who is himſelf a layer of colours*?" Quintilian and Pliny, who ſpeak of the works of the ancient painters and ſtatuaries, with ſo much taſte and ſentiment, handled not themſelves either the pencil or the chiſſel, nor Longinus and Dionyſius the harp. But altho' ſuch as have actually performed nothing in the art itſelf, may not, on that account, be totally diſqualified to judge with accuracy of any piece of workmanſhip, yet perhaps a judgment will come with more authority and force from an artiſt himſelf. Hence the connoiſſeurs highly prize the treatiſe of Rubens, concerning the imitation of antique ſtatues, the Art of Painting by Leonardo da Vinci, and the Lives of the Painters by Vaſari. As for the ſame reaſons, Rameau's diſſertation on the thorough baſs, and the introduction to a good taſte in muſic by the excellent, but neglected Geminiani, demand a particular regard. The prefaces of Dryden would be equally valuable, if he did not ſo frequently contradict himſelf, and advance opinions diametrically oppoſite to each other. Some of Corneille's diſcourſes on his own tragedies are admirably juſt. And one of the beſt pieces of modern criticiſm, the academy's obſervations on the Cid, was, we know, the work of perſons who had themſelves written well. And our author's own excellent preface * to his tranſlation of the Iliad, one of the beſt pieces of proſe in the Engliſh language, is an example how well poets are qualified to be critics.

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* Characteriſtics. V. 3. p. 190. Edit. 12mo.

4. Some neither can for wits nor critics paſs,
As heavy mules are neither horſe nor aſs;
Thoſe half-learn'd witlings, numerous in our iſle,
As half-form'd inſects on the banks of Nile;

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* Yet our author was not ſatisfied with this preface; he uſed to ſay it was too pompous and poetical; too much on *the great horſe* was his expreſſion; and preferred his poſtſcript to the Odyſſey; and often talked of the excellence of Dryden's proſe-ſtyle.

Unfiniſh'd things, one knows not what to call,
Their generation's ſo equivocal [*].

THESE lines and thoſe preceding, and following them, are excellently ſatirical; and were, I think, the firſt we find in his works, that give an indication of that ſpecies of poetry to which his talent was moſt powerfully bent, and in which, tho' not, as we ſhall ſee, in others, he excelled all mankind [†]. The ſimile of the mule heightens the ſatire, and is new; as is the application of the inſects of the Nile. POPE never ſhines ſo brightly as when he is proſcribing bad authors.

5. — In the ſoul while MEMORY prevails,
The ſolid pow'r of UNDERSTANDING fails;
Where beams of bright IMAGINATION play,
The MEMORY's ſoft figures melt away [‡].

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[*] Ver. 38.

[†] Atterbury and Bolingbroke had the ſame opinion of the bent and turn of our author's genius. The former, on reading the famous character of Addiſon, wrote this to his friend; Let. 12. "Since you now therefore know where your real ſtrength lies, I hope you will not ſuffer that talent to lie unemploy'd." And Bolingbroke, ſpeaking of his didactic works, ſays to Swift, Let. 44, 1729. "This flatters my judgment; who always thought, that, univerſal as his talents are, *This* is *eminently* and *peculiarly His*, above all writers I know, living or dead; I do not except Horace."

[‡] Ver. 56.

I HARDLY believe there is in any language a metaphor more appoſitely applied, or more elegantly expreſſed, than this of the effects of the warmth of fancy. Locke, who has embelliſhed his dry ſubject with a vaſt variety of pleaſing ſimilitudes and alluſions, has a paſſage, relating to the retentiveneſs of the memory, ſo very like this before us, and ſo happily worded, that I cannot forbear giving the reader the pleaſure of comparing them together; only premiſing, that theſe two paſſages are patterns of the manner in which the metaphor ſhould be uſed, and of the method of preſerving it unmixed with any other idea, and not continuing it too far. " Our minds repreſent to us thoſe tombs to which we are approaching; where, though the braſs and marble remain, yet the inſcriptions are effaced by time, and the imagery moulders away. How much the conſtitution of our bodies are concerned in this, and whether the temper of the brain makes this difference, that in ſome, it retains the characters drawn on it like marble, in others like freeſtone, and in others little better than ſand, I ſhall not here enquire; though it may ſeem probable that the conſtitution of the body does ſometimes influence the memory; ſince we ſometimes find a diſeaſe quite ſtrip the mind of all its ideas; and the flames of a fever, in a few days, CALCINE all thoſe images to duſt and confuſion, which ſeemed to be as laſting as if graved in marble *."

WITH reſpect to the truth of this obſervation of POPE, experience abundantly evinceth, that the three great faculties of the ſoul here ſpoken of are ſeldom found united in the ſame perſon. There have yet exiſted but a few tranſcendent geniuſes, who have been ſingularly bleſt with this rare aſſemblage of different talents. All that I can at preſent recollect who have at once enjoyed, in full vigour, a ſublime and ſplendid imagination, a ſolid and profound underſtanding, an exact and tenacious memory, are Herodotus, Plato, Tully, Livy, Tacitus, Galilæo, Bacon, Des Cartes, Malebranche, Milton, Burnet of the

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* Eſſay concerning Human Underſtanding, ch. x. ſect. 5.

the Charterhouſe, Berkley and Monteſquieu. Bacon, in his Novum Organum, divides the human genius into two ſorts; "Men of dry diſtinct heads, cool imaginations, and keen application; they eaſily apprehend the differences of things, are maſters in controverſy, and excell in confutation; and theſe are the moſt common. The ſecond ſort of men of warm fancies, elevated thought, and wide knowledge: they inſtantly perceive the reſemblances of things, and are poets or makers in ſcience, invent arts, and ſtrike out new light wherever they carry their views*." This general obſervation has in it all that acuteneſs, comprehenſion, and knowledge of man, which ſo eminently diſtinguiſhed this philoſopher.

6. One ſcience only will one genius fit;
So vaſt is art, ſo narrow human wit.—
Not only bounded to peculiar arts,
But oft in thoſe confin'd to ſingle parts †.

When Tully attempted poetry, he became as ridiculous as Bolingbroke when he attempted

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* Pag. 40. † Ver. 60.

tempted philoſophy and divinity. We look in vain for that genius which produced the Diſſertation on Parties, in the tedious philoſophical works; of which it is no exaggerated ſatire to ſay, that the reaſoning of them is ſophiſtical and inconcluſive, the ſtyle diffuſe and verboſe, and the learning ſeemingly contained in them not drawn from the originals, but picked up and purloined from French critics and tranſlations; and particularly from Bayle, from Rapin, and Thomaſſin, (as perhaps may be one day minutely ſhewn) together with the aſſiſtances which our Cudworth and Stanley happily afforded a writer confeſſedly ignorant of the Greek tongue, who has yet the inſufferable * arrogance to vilify and cenſure, and to think he can confute, the beſt writers in that beſt language.

WHEN

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* I cannot forbear ſubjoining a paſſage of an excellent writer and accompliſhed ſcholar, which is ſo very appoſite to the preſent purpoſe, that one would think the author had Bolingbroke in his eye, if his valuable work had not been publiſhed before the world was bleſſed with the Firſt Philoſophy. "He who pretends to diſcuſs the Sentiments of Pythagoras, Plato, Ariſtotle,

WHEN Fontaine, whoſe tales indicated a truly comic genius, brought a comedy on the ſtage, it was received with a contempt equally unexpected and deſerved. Terence has left us no tragedy; and the Mourning Bride of Congreve, notwithſtanding the praiſes beſtowed on it by POPE, in the Dunciad*, is certainly a deſpicable performance; the plot is unnaturally intricate, and over-

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ſtotle, or any one of the ancient philoſophers, or even to cite and tranſlate him, (except in trite and obvious ſentiments) without accurately knowing the Greek tongue in general; the nice differences of many words apparently ſynonimous; the peculiar ſtyle of the author whom he preſumes to handle; the new-coined words, and new ſignifications given to old words, uſed by ſuch author and his ſect, the whole philoſophy of ſuch ſect; together with the connections and dependencies of its ſeveral parts, whether Logical, Ethical, or Phyſical; he, I ſay, that without this previous preparation, attempts what I have ſaid, will ſhoot in the dark; will be liable to perpetual *blunders*; will *explain*, and *praiſe*, and *cenſure*, merely by *chance*; and though HE MAY POSSIBLY TO FOOLS APPEAR AS A WISE MAN, WILL CERTAINLY AMONG THE WISE EVER PASS FOR A FOOL. Such a man's intellect comprehends antient philoſophy, as his eye comprehends a diſtant proſpect. He may ſee perhaps enough to know mountains from plains, and ſeas from woods; but for an accurate diſcernment of particulars and their character, this, without farther helps, 'tis impoſſible he ſhould attain." HERMES, by HARRIS: Book ii. chap. iii. p. 270.

* B. iii. v. 310. In the notes.

charged with incidents, the ſentiments trite, and the language turgid and bombaſt. Heemſkirk and Teniers could not ſucceed in a ſerious and ſublime ſubject of hiſtory-painting. The latter, it is well known, deſigned cartoons for tapeſtry, repreſenting the hiſtory of the Turriani of Lombardy. Both the compoſition and the expreſſion are extremely indifferent; and certain nicer virtuoſi have remarked, that in the ſerious pieces of Titian himſelf, even in one of his Laſt Suppers, a circumſtance of the Ridiculous and the Familiar is introduced, which ſuits not with the dignity of his ſubject. * Hogarth's

picture

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* The author gladly lays hold of the opportunity of this THIRD EDITION of his work, to confeſs a miſtake he had committed with reſpect to two admirable paintings of Mr. Hogarth, his PAUL PREACHING, and his INFANT MOSES; which, on a cloſer examination, are not chargeable with the blemiſhes imputed to them. Juſtice obliges him to declare the high opinion he entertains of the abilities of this inimitable artiſt, who ſhines in ſo many different lights, and on ſuch very diſſimilar ſubjects; and whoſe works have more of what the ancients called the ΗΘΟΣ in them, than the compoſitions of any other Modern. For the reſt, the author begs leave to add, that he is ſo far from being aſhamed of retracting his error, that he had rather appear a MAN OF CANDOR, than the beſt CRITIC that ever lived.

picture of Richard III. is pure and unmixed with any diſſimilar and degrading circumſtances, and ſtrongly impreſſes terror and amazement. The modeſty and good ſenſe of the ancients is, in this particular, as in others, remarkable. The ſame writer never preſumed to undertake more than one kind of dramatic poetry, if we except the CYCLOPS of Euripides. A poet never preſumed to plead in public, or to write hiſtory, or indeed any conſiderable work in proſe. The ſame actors never recited tragedy and comedy: this was obſerved long ago, by Plato, in the third book of his REPUBLIC. They ſeem to have held that diverſity, nay univerſality, of excellence, at which the moderns frequently aim, to be a gift unattainable by man. We therefore of Great Britain have perhaps more reaſon to congratulate ourſelves, on two very ſingular phenomena; I mean, Shakeſpear's being able to pourtray characters ſo very different as FALSTAFF, and MACKBETH; and Garrick's being able to perſonate ſo inimitably a LEAR, or an

ABEL DRUGGER. Nothing can more fully demonſtrate the extent and verſatility of theſe two original geniuſes. Corneille, whom the French are ſo fond of oppoſing to Shakeſpear, produced very contemptible comedies; and the PLAIDEURES of Racine is ſo cloſe a reſemblance of Ariſtophanes, that it ought not to be here urged. The moſt univerſal of authors ſeems to be Voltaire; who has written almoſt equally well, both in proſe and verſe; and whom either the tragedies of MEROPE and MAHOMET, or the hiſtory of LOUIS XIV. would, alone, have immortalized.

7. Thoſe rules of old, diſcover'd not devis'd,
Are nature ſtill, but nature methodiz'd;
Nature, like liberty, is but reſtrain'd
By the ſame laws which firſt herſelf ordain'd *.

THE precepts of the art of poeſy were poſterior to practice; the rules of the Epopea were all drawn from the Iliad and the Odyſſey; and of Tragedy, from the OEDIPUS of Sophocles. A petulant rejection, and an implicit

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* Ver. 88.

plicit veneration, of the rules of the ancient critics, are equally deſtructive of true taſte. "It ought to be the firſt endeavour of a writer, ſays the excellent RAMBLER *, to diſtinguiſh nature from cuſtom, or that which is eſtabliſhed, becauſe it is right, from that which is right only becauſe it is eſtabliſhed; that he may neither violate eſſential principles by a deſire of novelty, nor debar himſelf from the attainment of any beauties within his view, by a needleſs fear of breaking rules, where no literary dictator had authority to preſcribe." The ſame penetrating and judicious author, who always thinks for himſelf, has alſo another paſſage too full of ſtrong ſenſe, and too appoſite to the ſubject before us, to be here omitted.

"CRITICISM, though dignified, from the earlieſt ages, by the labours of men eminent for knowledge and ſagacity, and, ſince the revival of polite literature, the favourite ſtudy of European ſcholars, has not yet attained

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* No. 156.

the certainty and ſtability of ſcience. The rules that have been hitherto received, are ſeldom drawn from any ſettled principle, or ſelf-evident poſtulate; nor are adapted to the natural and invariable conſtitution of things: but will be found upon examination, to be the arbitrary edicts of dictators exalted by their own authority, who out of many means by which the ſame end may be attained, ſelected thoſe which happened to occur to their own reflection; and then by an edict, which idleneſs and timidity were willing to obey, prohibited any new experiments of wit, reſtrained fancy from the indulgence of her innate inclination to hazard and adventure, and condemned all the future flights of genius, to purſue the path of the Mæonian eagle.

THE authority claimed by critics may be more juſtly oppoſed, as it is apparently derived from them whom they endeavour to controul; for we are indebted for a very ſmall part of the rules of writing to the acuteneſs

cuteneſs of thoſe by whom they are deliver-ed. The critics have generally no other merit, than that of having read the works of great authors with attention; they have obſerved the arrangement of their matter, and the graces of their expreſſion; and then expect honour and reverence for precepts, which they never could have invented: ſo that practice has introduced rules, rather than rules have directed practice *."

THIS liberal and manly cenſure of critical bigotry, extends not to thoſe fundamental and indiſpenſable rules, which nature and neceſſity dictate, and demand to be obſerved; ſuch for inſtance, as in the higher kinds of poetry, that the action of the epopea be one, great, and entire; that the hero be eminently diſtinguiſhed, move our concern, and deeply intereſt us; that the epiſodes ariſe eaſily out of the main fable; that the action commence as near the cataſtrophe as poſſible: and, in the drama, that no more events be

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* No. 158.

be crowded together, than can be juſtly ſuppoſed to happen during the time of repreſentation, or to be tranſacted on one individual ſpot, and the like. But the abſurdity here animadverted on, is the ſcrupulous nicety of thoſe, who bind themſelves to obey frivolous and unimportant laws; ſuch as, that an epic poem ſhould conſiſt not of leſs than twelve books; that it ſhould end fortunately; that in the firſt book there ſhould be no ſimile; that the exordium ſhould be very ſimple and unadorned: that in a tragedy, only three perſonages ſhould appear at once upon the ſtage; and that every tragedy ſhould conſiſt of five acts; by the rigid obſervation of which laſt unneceſſary precept, the poet is deprived of uſing many a moving ſtory, that would furniſh matter enough for three perhaps, but not for five acts; with other rules, of the like indifferent nature. For the reſt, as Voltaire obſerves, * whether the action of an epopea

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* Eſſay ſur la Poeſie Epique, pag. 339. tom. i.

be ſimple or complex, completed in a month or in a year, or a longer time, whether the ſcene be fixed on one ſpot, as in the Iliad; or that the hero voyages from ſea to ſea, as in the Odyſſey; whether he be furious like Achilles, or pious like Eneas; whether the action paſs on land or ſea; on the coaſt of Africa, as in the Luziada of Camoens; in America, as in the Araucana of Alonzo D'Ercilla; in heaven, in hell, beyond the limits of our world, as in the Paradiſe Loſt; all theſe circumſtances are of no conſequence: the poem will be for ever an Epic poem, an Heroic poem; at leaſt, till another new title be found proportioned to its merit. If you ſcruple, ſays Addiſon, to give the title of an Epic poem to the Paradiſe Loſt of Milton, call it, if you chooſe, a DIVINE poem: give it whatever name you pleaſe; provided you confeſs, that it is a work as admirable in its kind as the Iliad.

8. Hear how learn'd Greece her uſeful rules indites,
When to repreſs, and when indulge our flights *.

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* Ver. 92.

In the ſecond part of Shafteſbury's Advice to an Author, is a judicious and elegant account of the riſe and progreſs of arts and ſciences, in ancient Greece; to ſubjects of which ſort, it were to be wiſhed this author had always confined himſelf, as he indiſputably underſtood them well, rather than have blemiſhed and belied his patriotiſm, by writing againſt the religion of his country. I ſhall give the reader a paſſage that relates to the origin of criticiſm, which is curious and juſt. "When the perſuaſive arts, which were neceſſary to be cultivated among a people that were to be convinced before they acted, were grown thus in repute; and the power of moving the affections become the ſtudy and emulation of the forward wits and aſpiring geniuſes of the times; it would neceſſarily happen, that many geniuſes of equal ſize and ſtrength, though leſs covetous of public applauſe, of power, or of influence over mankind, would content themſelves with the contemplation, merely, of theſe enchanting arts. Theſe they would the better enjoy, the more they refined their taſte, and cultivated their ear. —Hence was the origin of CRITICS; who, as arts and ſciences advanced, would neceſſarily come withal into repute; and being heard with ſatisfaction in their turn, were at length tempted to become authors, and appear in public. Theſe were honoured with the name of Sophiſts; a character which in early times was highly reſpected. Nor did the graveſt philoſophers, who were cenſors of manners, and critics of a higher degree, diſdain to exert their criticiſm on the inferior arts; eſpecially in thoſe relating to ſpeech, and the power of argument and perſuaſion. When ſuch a race as this was once riſen, 'twas no longer poſſible to impoſe on mankind, by what was ſpecious and pretending. The public would be paid in no falſe wit, or jingling eloquence. Where the learned critics were ſo well received, and philoſophers themſelves diſdained not to be of the number; there could not fail to ariſe critics of an inferior order, who would ſubdivide the ſeveral provinces of this empire [*]."

> 9. Know well each Ancient's proper character;
> His fable, ſubject, ſcope, in every page;
> Religion, country, genius of his age [†].

From their inattention to theſe particulars, many critics, and particularly the French, have been guilty of great abſurdities. When Perrault impotently attempted to ridicule the firſt ſtanza of the firſt Olympic of Pindar, he was ignorant that the poet, in beginning with the praiſes of WATER [‡], alluded to the philoſophy of Thales, who taught that water was the principle of all things; and which philoſophy, Empedocles the Sicilian, a cotemporary of Pindar, and a ſubject of Hiero to whom Pindar wrote, had adopted in his beautiful poem. Homer and the Greek tragedians have been likewiſe cenſured, the former for protracting the Iliad after the death of Hector; and the latter, for continuing the AJAX and PHOENISSÆ, after the deaths of their reſpective heroes. But the cenſurers did not conſider the importance of burial among the ancients; and that the action of the Iliad would have been imperfect without a deſcription of the funeral rites of Hector and Patroclus: as the two tragedies, without thoſe of Polynices and Eteocles: for the ancients eſteemed a deprivation of ſepulture to be a more ſevere calamity than death itſelf. It is obſervable that this circumſtance did not occur to POPE *, when he endeavoured to juſtify this conduct of Homer, by only ſaying, that as the anger of Achilles does not die with Hector, but perſecutes his very remains, the poet ſtill keeps up to his ſubject by deſcribing the many effects of his anger, 'till it is fully ſatisfied: and that for this reaſon, the two laſt books of the Iliad may be thought not to be excreſcencies, but eſſential to the poem. I will only add, that I do not know an author whoſe capital excellence ſuffers more from the reader's not regarding his climate and country, than the incomparable Cervantes. There is a ſtriking propriety in the madneſs of Don Quixote, not frequently taken notice of; for Thuanus informs us, that MADNESS is a common diſorder among the Spaniards at the latter part of life, about the age of which the knight is repreſented. " Sur la fin de ſes jours Mendozza devint furieux, comme font d' ordinaire les Eſpagnols [*]."

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[*] Characteriſtics, vol. I. 12mo. pag. 163.

[†] Ver. 119.

[‡] Αϱιϛον μεν ΥΔΩΡ.

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* Iliad xxiii. Note 1.

10. Still with itſelf compar'd, his text peruſe,
And let your comment be the Mantuan Muſe [†].

ALTHOUGH perhaps it may ſeem impoſſible to produce any new obſervations on Homer and Virgil, after ſo many volumes of criticiſm as have been ſpent upon them, yet the following remarks have a novelty and penetration in them that may entertain; eſpecially, as the treatiſe from which they are

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[*] Perroniana et Thuana, a Cologne, 1695, pag. 431.

[†] Ver. 128.

taken is extremely ſcarce. "Quæ variæ inter ſe notæ atque imagines animorum, a principibus utriuſque populi poetis, Homero et Virgilio, mirificè exprimuntur. Siquidem Homeri duces et reges rapacitate, libidine, atque anilibus queſtibus, lacrymiſque puerilibus, Græcam levitatem et inconſtantiam referunt. Virgiliani vero principes, ab eximio poeta, qui Romanæ ſeveritatis faſtidium, et Latinum ſupercilium verebatur, et ad heroum populum loquebatur, ita componuntur ad majeſtatem conſularem, ut quamvis ab Aſiatica mollitie luxuque venerint, inter Furios atque Claudios nati educatique videantur. Neque ſuam, ullo actu, Æneas originem prodidiſſet, niſi, a præfactiore aliquanto pietate, fudiſſet crebro copiam lacrymarum.—Qua meliorem expreſſione morum hac ætate, non modo Virgilius Latinorum poetarum princeps, ſed quivis inflàtiſſimus vernaculorum, Homero præfertur: cum hic animos proceribus indurit ſuos, ille vero alienos.—Quamobrem varietas morum, qui carmine reddebantur, et hominum ad quos ea dirigebantur,

bantur, inter Latinam Græcamque poeſin, non inventionis tantum attulit, ſed et elocutionis diſcrimen illud, quod præcipue inter Homerum et Virgilium deprehenditur; cum ſententias et ornamenta quæ Homerus ſparſerat, Virgilius, Romanorum arium cauſa, contraxerit; atque ad mores et ingenia retulerit eorum, qui a poeſi non petebant publicam aut privatam inſtitutionem, quam ipſi Marte ſuo invenerant; ſed tantum delectationem *." Blackwell, in his Enquiry into the Life and Writings of Homer, has taken many obſervations from this valuable book, particularly in his twelfth Section.

11. Some beauties yet no precepts can declare,
For there's a happineſs, as well as care.
Muſic reſembles poetry; in each
Are nameleſs graces, which no methods teach,
And which a maſter-hand alone can reach †.

Pope in this paſſage ſeems to have remembered one of the eſſays of Bacon, of which he

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* J. Vincentii Gravinæ de Poesi, ad S. Maffeium Epist. Added to his treatiſe entitled, Della Ragion Poetica. In Napoli. 1716, pag. 239, 250.

† Ver. 141.

he is known to have been remarkably fond. "There is no excellent beauty, that hath not ſome ſtrangeneſs in the proportion. A man cannot tell whether Apelles or Albert Durer, were the more trifler: whereof the one would make a perſonage by geometrical proportions; the other by taking the beſt parts out of divers faces, to make one excellent. Such perſonages, I think, would pleaſe nobody, but the painter that made them. Not but I think, a painter may make a better face than ever was; but he muſt do it by a kind of felicity, as a muſician that maketh an excellent ayre in muſic, and not by rule. A man ſhall ſee faces, that if you examine them, part by part, you ſhall find never a good one; and yet altogether doe well *".

12. Thus Pegaſus, a nearer way to take,
May boldly deviate from the common track;
From vulgar bounds with brave diſorder part,
And ſnatch a grace beyond the reach of art,
Which, without paſſing thro' the judgment, gains
The heart, and all it's ends at once obtains †.

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* Eſſay xliii. On BEAUTY.

† Ver. 150.

HERE is evidently a blameable mixture of metaphors; where the attributes of the horſe and the writer are confounded. The former may juſtly be ſaid to "take a nearer way, and, to deviate from a track;" but how can a *horſe* "ſnatch a grace," or "gain the heart?"

13. Some figures monſtrous and miſhap'd appear,
Conſider'd ſingly, or beheld too near,
Which, but proportion'd to their light, or place,
Due diſtance reconciles to time and place*.

BY this excellent obſervation, delivered in a beautiful metaphor, all the faults imputed to Homer may be juſtified. Thoſe who cenſure what is called the GROSSNESS of ſome of his images, may pleaſe to attend to the following remark of a writer, by no means prejudiced in favour of the ancients. "Quant a ce qu'on appelle GROSSIERETE dans les héros d'Homére, on peut rire tant qu'on voudra de voir Patrocle, au neuviéme livre de l'Iliade, mettre trois gigots de mouton dans une marmite, allumer et ſoufler le feu, et préparer le diner avec Achille : Achille et Patrocle n'en ſont pas moins éclatans. Charles XII. Roi de Suéde, a foit ſix mois ſa cuiſine a Demir-Tocca, ſans perdre rien de ſon heroiſme; et la plûpart de nos generaux qui portent dans une campe tout le luxe d'une cour effeminée, auront bien de la pein a egaler ces heros, qui faiſoient leur cuiſine eux-memes.—— En un mot, Homere avoit a repreſenter un Ajax et un Hector; non un courtiſan de Verſailles, ou de Saint James *."

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* Ver. 171.

13. A prudent chief not always muſt diſplay
His pow'rs in equal rank, and fair array †.

THE ſame may be ſaid of muſic: concerning which, a diſcerning judge has lately made the following obſervation. " I do not mean to affirm, that in this extenſive work [of Marcello] every recitative, air, or chorus, is of

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* Voltaire, Eſſay ſur la Poeſie Epique. Les Oeuvres. Tom. ii. pag. 354, 355. This Eſſay is very different from what formerly appeared in England.

† Ver. 175.

of equal excellence. A continued elevation of this kind no author ever came up to. Nay, if we conſider that variety, which in all arts is neceſſary to keep up attention, we may perhaps affirm with truth, that INEQUALITY makes a part of the character of excellence: that ſomething ought to be thrown into ſhades, in order to make the lights more ſtriking. And, in this reſpect, Marcello is truly excellent: if ever he ſeems to FALL, it is only to RISE with more aſtoniſhing majeſty and greatneſs [*]." It may be pertinent to ſubjoin Roſcommon's remark on the ſame ſubject.

—— —— —— —— —— Far the greateſt part
Of what ſome call neglect, is ſtudy'd art.
When Virgil ſeems to trifle in a line,
'Tis but a warning piece, which gives the ſign
To wake your fancy, and prepare your ſight
To reach the noble height of ſome unuſual flight[†].

14. Hail bards triumphant born in happier days[‡].

DOCTOR Warburton is of opinion, that "there is a *pleaſantry* in this title, which alludes to the ſtate of WARFARE, that all true genius muſt undergo while here on earth." Is not this interpretation of the word *triumphant* very far-fetched, and foreign to the author's meaning? Who, I conceive, uſed the word, to denote merely the TRIUMPH, which aroſe from *ſuperiority*.

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[*] Aviſon's Eſſay on Muſical Expreſſion, edit. ii. pag. 103.

[†] Eſſay on Tranſl. Verſe.

[‡] Ver. 189.

15. The laſt, the meaneſt of your ſons inſpire *.

"THIS word *laſt*, ſays the ſame commentator, ſpoken in his early youth, as is were by chance, ſeems to have been OMINOUS." I am not perſuaded that all true genius died with POPE: for one would be tempted to think, that the Seaſons of Thomſon, and Pleaſures of Imagination, and the Odes of Akenſide, the Night-thoughts of Young, the Leonidas of Glover, the Elegy of Gray, and Ode on Eton College, the truly pathetic Monody on lady Lyttleton, together with many Pieces in Dodſley's Miſcellanies, were not publiſhed when Dr. Warburton delivered this inſinuation of a failure of poetical abilities.

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* Ver. 196.

16. So pleas'd at firſt the towring Alps we try,
Mount o'er the vales, and ſeem to tread the ſky,
Th' eternal ſnows appear already paſt,
And the firſt clouds and mountains ſeem the laſt:
But, thoſe attain'd, we tremble to ſurvey
The growing labours of the lengthen'd way;
Th' increaſing proſpect tires our wandring eyes,
Hills peep o'er hills, and Alps on Alps ariſe*.

THIS compariſon is frequently mentioned, as an inſtance of the ſtrength of fancy. The images however appear too general and indiſtinct, and the laſt line conveys no new idea to the mind. The following picture in Shafteſbury, on the ſame ſort of ſubject, appears to be more full and ſtriking. "Beneath the mountain's foot, the rocky country riſes into hills, a proper baſis of the ponderous maſs above: where huge embodied rocks lie piled on one another, and ſeem to prop the high arch of heaven. See! with what trembling ſteps poor mankind tread the narrow brink of the deep precipices! From whence with giddy horror they look down, miſtruſting even the ground that bears them; whilſt they hear the hollow ſound of torrents underneath, and ſee the ruin of the impending rock; with falling trees, which hang with their roots upwards, and ſeem to draw more ruin after them [*]." See the picturesque deſcription of Annibal paſſing the Alps, in Livy, who is a great poet.

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* Ver. 225.

> 17. A perfect judge will read each word of wit,
> With the ſame ſpirit, that it's author writ [†].

To be able to judge of poetry, ſays Voltaire, a man muſt feel ſtrongly, muſt be born with ſome ſparks of that fire, which animates the poet whom he criticiſes. As in deciding upon the merit of a piece of muſic, it is not enough, it is indeed nothing, to calculate the proportion of ſounds as a mathematician, but we muſt have an ear and a ſoul for muſic [‡].

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[*] The MORALISTS. Characteriſtics, vol. ii. pag. 253.

[†] Ver. 233.

[‡] Ubi ſupra, pag. 361.

18. Thus when we view ſome well-proportion'd dome,
(The world's juſt wonder, and ev'n thine, O Rome!)
No ſingle parts unequally ſurpriſe,
All comes united to th' admiring eyes;
No monſtrous height, or breadth, or length appear,
The Whole at once is bold, and regular [*].

THIS is juſtly and elegantly expreſſed; and though it may ſeem difficult to ſpeak of the ſame ſubject after ſuch a deſcription, yet Akenſide has ventured, and nobly ſucceeded.

Mark, how the dread PANTHEON ſtands,
Amid the domes of modern hands!
Amid the toys of idle ſtate,
How ſimply, how ſeverely great!
Then pauſe! [†] — — —

19. Once on a time, La Mancha's knight, they ſay,
A certain bard encountring on the way [‡].——

BY this ſhort tale POPE has ſhewed us, how much he could have excelled in telling a ſtory of humour. The incident is taken from the ſecond part of Don Quixote, firſt written by Don Alonzo Fernandez de Avellanada, and afterwards tranſlated, or rather imitated and new-modelled, by no leſs an author than the celebrated Le Sage *. The book is not ſo contemptible as ſome authors inſinuate; it was well received in France, and abounds in many ſtrokes of humour and character worthy Cervantes himſelf. The brevity to which POPE's narration was confined, would not permit him to inſert the following humorous dialogue at length. "I am ſatisfied you'll compaſs your deſign, ſaid the ſcholar, provided you omit the combat in the liſts. Let him have a care of that, ſaid Don Quixote interrupting him, that is the beſt part of the plot. But Sir, quoth the Bachelor, if you would have me adhere to Ariſtotle's rules, I muſt omit the combat. Ariſtotle, replied the Knight, I grant was a

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[*] Ver. 247. [†] Ode to L. Huntington. [‡] Ver. 267.

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* Le Sage generally took his plans from the Spaniſh writers, the manners of which nation he has well imitated. Le Diable Boiteux was drawn from the Diabolo Cojuelo of Guevara; his Gil Blas from Don Guſman D'Alfarache. Le Sage made a journey into Spain to acquaint himſelf with the Spaniſh cuſtoms. He is a natural writer, of true humour. He died in a little houſe near Paris, where he ſupported himſelf by writing, 1747. He had been deaf ten years.

man of ſome parts; but his capacity was not unbounded: and give me leave to tell you, his authority does not extend over combats in the liſt, which are far above his narrow rules. Would you ſuffer the chaſte queen of Bohemia to periſh? For how can you clear her innocence? Believe me, COMBAT is the moſt honourable method you can purſue; and, beſides, it will add ſuch grace to your play, that all the rules in the univerſe muſt not ſtand in competition with it. Well, Sir Knight, replied the Bachelor, for your ſake, and for the honour of chivalry, I will not leave out the combat: and that it may appear the more glorious, all the court of Bohemia ſhall be preſent at it, from the princes of the blood, to the very footmen. But ſtill one difficulty remains, which is, that our common theatres are not large enough for it. There muſt be one erected on purpoſe; anſwered the Knight; and in a word, rather than leave out the combat, the play had better be acted in a field or plain*."

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* Continuation of Hiſt. of Don Quixote, b. iii. ch. 10.

20. Some to *conceit* alone their taſte confine *,
And glitt'ring thoughts ſtruck out at every line.

SIMPLICITY, with elegance and propriety †, is the perfection of ſtyle in every compoſition. Let us, on this occaſion, compare two paſſages from Theocritus and Ovid upon the ſame ſubject. The Cyclops, in the former, addreſſes Galatea with compariſons, natural, obvious, and drawn from his ſituation.

Ω λευκα Γαλατεια, τι τον φιλεοντ' ἀποβαλλη;
Λευκοτερα πακτας ποτιδειν, απαλωτερα δ' ἀρνος,
Μοσχω γαυροτερα, φιαρωτερα ομφακος ωμας *.

Theſe ſimple and paſtoral images were the moſt proper that could occur to a Cyclops, and to an inhabitant of Sicily. Ovid could not reſtrain the luxuriancy of his genius, on the ſame occaſion, from wandering into an endleſs variety of flowery and unappropriated ſimilitudes, and equally applicable to any other perſon or place.

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* Ver. 289.

† Λεξεως δε αρετη, σαφη και μη ταπεινην εἶναι. Ariſtot. Poet. c. 22.

‡ Idyll. Κυκλ.

Candidior nivei folio, Galatea, liguſtri;
Floridior pratis; longâ procerior alno;
Splendidior vitro; tenero laſcivior hædo;
Lævior aſſiduo detritis æquore conchis;
Solibus hybernis, æſtivâ gratior umbrâ;
Nobilior pomis; platano conſpectior altâ;
Lucidior glacie; maturâ dulcior uvâ;
Mollior et cygni plumis, et lacte coacto;
Et, ſi non fugias, riguo formoſior horto *.

There are ſeven more lines of compariſon.

21. Falſe eloquence, like the priſmatic glaſs,
It's gaudy colours ſpreads on every place:
The face of nature we no more ſurvey,
All glares alike without diſtinction gay †.

THE nauſeous affectation of expreſſing every thing pompouſly and poetically, is no where more viſible than in a poem lately publiſhed, entitled AMYNTOR and THEODORA. The following inſtance may be alleged among many others. Amyntor having a pathetic tale to diſcover, being choaked with ſorrow and at a loſs for utterance, uſes theſe ornamental and unnatural images.

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* Metam. xiii. 789.

† Ver. 311.

——— ——— ——— ——— O could I ſteal
From Harmony her ſofteſt warbled ſtrain
Of melting air! or Zephyre's vernal voice!
Or Philomela's ſong, when love diſſolves
To liquid blandiſhment his evening lay,
All nature ſmiling round [*].

Voltaire has given a comprehenſive rule with reſpect to every ſpecies of compoſition, "Il ne faut rechercher, ni les penſées, ni les tours, ni les expreſſions, et que l'art, dans tous les grands ouvrages, eſt de bien raiſonner, ſans trop faire d'argument; de bien peindre, ſans vouloir tout peindre; d'émouvoir, ſans vouloir toujours exciter les paſſions [†]."

22. Some by old words to fame have made pretence [‡].

QUINTILIAN's advice on this ſubject is as follows. "Cum ſint autem verba propria, ficta, tranſlata; propriis dignitatem dat antiquitas. Namque et ſanctiorem, et magis admirabilem reddunt orationem, quibus non quilibet fuit uſurus: eoque ornamento acerrimi judicii Virgilius unice eſt uſus. *Olli* enim, et *quianam*, et *mis*, et *pone*, pellucent, et aſpergunt illam, quæ etiam in picturis eſt gratiſſima, vetuſtatis inimitabilem arti auctoritatem. Sed utendum modo, nec ex ultimis tenebris repetenda *."

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[*] Cant. 3. ver. 92.
[†] Oeuvres, tom. iii. pag. 332.
[‡] Ver. 324.

23. Where'er you find the cooling weſtern breeze,
In the next line it whiſpers through the trees †.

TRITE and unvaried rhymes offend us, not only as they are deſtitute of the grace of novelty, but as they imply careleſsneſs in the poet, who adopts what he finds ready made to his hands. We have not many compoſitions where NEW and uncommon rhymes are introduced. One or two writers however I cannot forbear mentioning, who have been ſtudious of this beauty. They are Parnelle, Pitt in his Tranſlations from Vida, Weſt in his Pindar, Thomſon in the Caſtle of Indolence, and the author of an elegant Ode TO SUMMER, publiſhed in a Miſcellany entitled the UNION ‡.

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* Inſt. Orat. lib. vii. c. 3.

† Ver. 350.

‡ Edinburgh, 1753, 12mo. p. 81.

24. A needleſs Alexandrine ends the ſong[*].

DRYDEN was the firſt who introduced the frequent uſe of this meaſure into our Engliſh heroic, for we do not ever find it even in the longer works of Sandys, nor in Waller. Dryden has often uſed it very happily, and it gives a complete harmony to many of his triplets. By ſcrupulouſly avoiding it, POPE has fallen into an unpleaſing and tireſome monotony in his Iliad.

25. And praiſe the eaſy vigour of a line,
    Where Denham's ſtrength and Waller's ſweetneſs join[†].

FENTON, in his entertaining obſervations on Waller, has given us a curious anecdote concerning the great induſtry and exactneſs with which Waller poliſhed even his ſmalleſt compoſitions. "When the court was at Windſor, theſe verſes[‡] were writ in the Taſſo of her Royal Highneſs, at Mr. Waller's requeſt, by the late duke of Buckinghamſhire; and I very well remember to have heard his Grace ſay, that the author employed the GREATEST PART OF A SUMMER, in compoſing, and correcting them. So that however he is generally reputed the parent of thoſe ſwarms of inſect wits, who affect to be thought eaſy writers, it is evident that he beſtowed much time and care on his poems, before he ventured them out of his hands *."

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[*] Ver. 356.

[†] Ver. 366.

[‡] Only ten in number.

26. True eaſe in writing comes from art not chance,
As thoſe move eaſieſt who have learn'd to dance †.

IT is well known, that the writings of Voiture, of Saraſſin, and Fontaine, coſt them much pains, and were laboured into that facility for which they are ſo famous, with repeated alterations, and many raſures. Moliere is reported to have paſt whole days in fixing upon a proper epithet or rhyme, altho' his verſes have all the flow and freedom of converſation. This happy facility, ſaid a man

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* Fenton's Waller, edit. 12mo. OBSERVATIONS, p. 148.
† Ver. 362.

of

f wit, may be compared to garden-terraces,
e expence of which does not appear: and
hich, after the coſt of ſeveral millions, yet
em to be a mere work of chance and na-
re. I have been informed, that Addiſon
as ſo extremely nice in poliſhing his proſe
mpoſitions, that, when almoſt a whole
preſſion of a Spectator was worked off,
would ſtop the preſs, to inſert a new pre-
ſition or conjunction.

Soft is the ſtrain when Zephyr gently blows,
And the ſmooth ſtream in ſmoother numbers flows;
But when loud ſurges laſh the ſounding ſhore,
The hoarſe rough verſe ſhould like the torrent roar;
When Ajax ſtrives ſome rock's vaſt weight to throw,
The line too labours, and the words move ſlow;
Not ſo, when ſwift Camilla ſcours the plain,
Flies o'er th' unbending corn, and ſkims along the
main *.

THESE lines are uſually cited as fine ex-
ples of adapting the ſound to the ſenſe.
t that POPE has failed in this endeavour,
s been lately demonſtrated by the RAM-
ER, " The verſe intended to repreſent

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* Ver. 367.

the *whiſper* of the *vernal breeze* muſt ſurely be confeſſed not much to excel in ſoftneſs or volubility; and the *ſmooth ſtream* runs with a perpetual claſh of jarring conſonants. The noiſe and turbulence of the *torrent*, is indeed, diſtinctly imaged; for it requires very little ſkill to make our language rough. But in the lines which mention the *effort of Ajax*, there is no particular heavineſs or delay. The *ſwiftneſs of Camilla* is rather contraſted than exemplified. Why the verſe ſhould be lengthened to expreſs ſpeed, will not eaſily be diſcovered. In the dactyls, uſed for that purpoſe by the ancients, two ſhort ſyllables were pronounced with ſuch rapidity, as to be equal only to one long; they therefore naturally exhibit the act of paſſing through a long ſpace in a ſhort time. But the *Alexandrine*, by its pauſe in the midſt, is a tardy and ſtately meaſure; and the word *unbending*, one of the moſt ſluggiſh and ſlow which our language affords, cannot much accelerate its motion *."

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* No. 92.]

28. Be thou the firſt true merit to befriend,
His praiſe is loſt, who ſtays till all commend *.

When Thomſon publiſhed his **Winter**, t lay a long time neglected, till Mr. Spenſe made honourable mention of it in his Eſſay on the Odyſſey; which becoming a popular book, made the poem univerſally known. Thomſon always acknowledged the uſe of his recommendation; and from this circumſtance, an intimacy commenced between the critic and the poet, which laſted till the lamented death of the latter, who was of a moſt amiable and benevolent temper.

29. And ſuch as Chaucer is ſhall Dryden be †.

Waller has an elegant copy of verſes on the mutability of the Engliſh tongue, which bears a ſtrong reſemblance to this paſſage of **Pope**.

Poets that laſting marble ſeek,
Muſt carve in Latin or in Greek;
We write in ſand; our language grows,
And like the tide, our work o'erflows.

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* Ver. 474. † Ver. 483.

Chaucer his SENSE can only boaſt,
The glory of his numbers loſt!
Years have defac'd his matchleſs ſtrain,
And yet HE DID NOT SING IN VAIN *.

To fix a language has been found, among the moſt able undertakers, to be a fruitleſs project. The ſtyle of the preſent French Novels and Memoirs, for the French at preſent produce little beſides, is viſibly different from that of Boileau and Boſſuet, notwithſtanding the ſtrict and ſeaſonable injunctions of the Academy: and the diction, even of ſuch a writer as Maffei, is corrupted with many words, not to be found in Machiavel or Arioſto.

30. So when the faithful pencil has deſign'd
Some bright idea of the maſter's mind,
When a new world leaps out at his command,
And ready nature waits upon his hand;
When the ripe colours ſoften and unite,
And ſweetly melt into juſt ſhade and light;
When mellowing years their full perfection give,
And each bold figure juſt begins to live,

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* Of ENGLISH VERSE. Fenton's edit. p. 147. 12mo.

The treacherous colours the fair art betray,
And all the bright creation fades away [*].

I HAVE quoted theſe beautiful lines at length, as I believe nothing was ever more happily expreſſed on the art of painting: a ſubject of which POPE always ſpeaks *con amore*. Of all poets whatever, Milton has ſpoken moſt feelingly of muſic, and POPE of painting. The reader may however compare the following paſſage of Dryden, on the ſame ſubject.

More cannot be by mortal art expreſs'd,
But venerable age ſhall add the reſt:
For Time ſhall with his ready pencil ſtand,
Retouch your figures with his ripening hand;
Mellow your colours, and imbrown the tint,
Add ev'ry grace, which Time alone can grant;
To future ages ſhall your fame convey,
And give more beauties than he takes away [†].

IF POPE has ſo much excelled in ſpeaking in the propereſt terms of this art, it may perhaps be aſcribed to his having practiſed it [‡];

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[*] Ver. 484.

[†] Dryden to Kneller.

[‡] Lord Mansfield has in his poſſeſſion a great curioſity; a head of Betterton, painted by POPE.

the ſame may be ſaid of Milton, with reſpect to muſic. It may perhaps be wondered at, that a proficiency in theſe arts is not now frequently found in the ſame perſon. I cannot at preſent recollect any painters that were good poets; except Salvator Roſa, and Charles Vermander of Mulbrac in Flanders, whoſe comedies are much eſteemed. But the ſatires of the former contain no ſtrokes of that fervid and wild imagination, ſo viſible in his landſchapes.

31. If wit ſo much from ign'rance undergo *.

THE inconveniences that attend wit are well enumerated in this excellent paſſage. Poets, who imagine they are known and admired, are frequently mortified and humbled. Boileau going one day to receive his penſion, and the treaſurer reading theſe words in his Order; "The penſion we have granted to Boileau, on account of the ſatisfaction *his works* have given us," aſked him of what kind were *his works*; "Of *Maſonry*, replied the poet, I am a BUILDER." Racine always reckoned the praiſes of the ignorant among the chief ſources of chagrin: and uſed to relate, that an old magiſtrate, who had never been at a play, was carried, one day, to his Andromaque. This magiſtrate was very attentive to the tragedy, to which was added the Plaideurs; and going out of the theatre, he ſaid to the author, " I am extremely pleaſed, Sir, with your Andromaque, I am only amazed that it ends ſo *gaily*; J' avois d' abord eu quelque envie de pleurer, mais la vue des petits chiens m' a fait rire."

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* Ver. 508.

32. Now they who reach Parnaſſus' lofty crown,
Employ their pains to ſpurn ſome others down *.

IF we conſider the arts uſed by Addiſon to ſuppreſs the riſing merit of POPE, which are now fully laid open, it gives one pain to reflect, to what mean artifices, envy and malignity will compel a gentleman and a genius, to deſcend. It is certain, that Addiſon diſcouraged Pope from inſerting the machinery in the Rape of the Lock: that he privately inſinuated that Pope was a Tory and a Jacobite; and had a hand in writing the Examiners: that Addiſon himſelf tranſlated the firſt book of Homer, publiſhed under Tickel's name: and that he ſecretly encouraged Gildon to abuſe Pope in a virulent pamphlet, for which Addiſon paid Gildon ten guineas. This uſage extorted from Pope the famous character of Atticus, which is perhaps the fineſt piece of ſatire extant. It is ſaid, that when Racine read his tragedy of Alexander to Corneille, the latter gave him many general commendations, but adviſed him to apply his genius, as not being adapted to the drama, to ſome other ſpecies of poetry. Corneille, one would hope, was incapable of a mean jealouſy, and if he gave this advice, thought it really proper to be given.

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* Ver. 514.

33. When love was all an eaſy monarch's care
Seldom at council, never in a war *.

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* Ver. 537.

THE diſſolute reign of Charles II. juſtly deſerved the ſatirical proſcription in this paſſage. Under the notion of laughing at the abſurd auſterities of the Puritans, it became the mode to run into the contrary extreme, and to ridicule real religion and unaffected virtue. The king, during his exile, had ſeen and admired the ſplendor of the court of Louis XIV. and endeavoured to introduce the ſame luxury into the Engliſh court. The common opinion, that this was the Auguſtan age in England, is exceſſively falſe. A juſt taſte was by no means yet formed. What was called SHEER WIT, was alone ſtudied and applauded. Rocheſter, it is ſaid, had no idea that there could be a better poet than Cowley. The king was perpetually quoting HUDIBRAS. The neglect of ſuch a poem as the Paradiſe Loſt, will for ever remain a monument of the bad taſte that prevailed. It may be added, that the progreſs of philological learning, and of what is called the belles lettres, was perhaps obſtructed by the inſtitution of the Royal Society; which turned the thoughts of men of genius to phyſical enquiries. Our ſtyle in proſe was but beginning to be poliſhed: although the diction of Hobbes is ſufficiently pure; which philoſopher, and not the FLORID Spratt, was the claſſic of that age. If I was to name a time, when the arts and polite literature, were at their height in this nation, I ſhould mention the latter end of king William, and the reign of queen Anne.

34. With mean complacence ne'er betray your truſt,
Nor be ſo civil as to prove unjuſt *.

OUR poet practiſed this excellent precept, in his conduct towards Wycherley; whoſe pieces he corrected, with equal freedom and judgment. But Wycherley, who had a bad heart, and an inſufferable ſhare of vanity, and who was one of the profeſſed WITS of the laſt-mentioned age, was ſoon diſguſted at this candour and ingenuity of POPE; inſomuch, that he came to an open and ungenerous rupture with him.

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* Ver. 581.

35. Fear not the anger of the wiſe to raiſe;
Thoſe beſt can bear reproof who merit praiſe *.

THE freedom and unreſervedneſs, with which Boileau and Racine communicated their works to each other, is hardly to be parallelled: of which many amiable inſtances appear in their letters, lately publiſhed by the ſon of the latter: particularly in the following. "J'ai trouvé que la TROMPETTE & LES SOURDS etoient trop joues, & qu' il ne falloit point trop appuyer ſur votre incommodité, moins encore chercher de l' eſprit ſur ce ſujet." Boileau communicated to his friend the firſt ſketch of his Ode on the Taking Namur. It is entertaining to contemplate a rude draught by ſuch a maſter; and is no leſs pleaſing to obſerve the temper, with which he receives the objections of Racine †. "J'ai deja retouché à tout cela; mais je ne veux point l'achever que je n'aie reçu vos remarques, qui ſurément m' éclaireront encore l'eſprit." The ſame volume informs us of

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[*] Ver. 583.

[†] Pag. 197. See alſo pag. 245. 191.

a curious anecdote, that Boileau * generally made the ſecond verſe of a couplet before the firſt; that he declared it was one of the grand ſecrets of poetry to give, by this means, a greater energy and meaning to his verſes; that he adviſed Racine to follow the ſame method, and ſaid on this occaſion, "I have taught him to rhyme with difficulty."

36. No place ſo ſacred from ſuch fops is barr'd,
Nor is Paul's church more ſafe than Paul's church-yard;
Nay, fly to altars; there they'll talk you dead:
For fools ruſh in where angels fear to tread †.

THIS ſtroke of ſatire is literally taken from Boileau.

Gardez-vous d'imiter ce rimeur furieux,
Qui de ſes vains écrits lecteur harmonieux
Aborde en récitant quiconque le ſalue,
Et pourſuit de ſes vers les paſſans dans le rue,
Il n'eſt Temple ſi ſaint, des Anges reſpecté,
Qui ſoit contre ſa muſe un lieu du ſureté ‡.

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* A ſtrong argument *againſt rhyme* in general might be drawn from this ſtrange practice of even ſo correct a writer as Boileau.

† Ver. 622.

‡ Art. Poet. Chant. iv.

Which lines allude to the impertinence of a French poet, called Du Perrier; who, finding Boileau one day at church, inſiſted upon repeating to him an ode, during the elevation of the hoſt; and deſired his opinion, whether or no it was in the manner of Malherbe. Without this anécdote the pleaſantry of the ſatire would be overlooked. It may here be occaſionally obſerved, how many beauties in this ſpecies of writing are loſt, for want of knowing the facts to which they allude. The following paſſage may be produced as a proof. Boileau, in his excellent Epiſtle to his Gardener at Anteuil, ſays,

> Mon maître, dirois-tu, paſſe pour un Docteur,
> Et parle quelquefois mieux qu' un Prédicateur *.

It ſeems our † author and Racine returned one day in high ſpirits from Verſailles, with two

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* Epitre 11.

† The names of Racine, and Corneille, being often mentioned in this work, it will not be improper to add an ingenious parallel of their reſpective merits, written by Fontenelle.

two honeſt citizens of Paris. As their converſation was full of gaiety and humour, the

two

I. Corneille had no excellent author before his eyes, whom he could follow: Racine had Corneille.

II. Corneille found the French ſtage in a barbarous ſtate, and advanced it to great Perfection: Racine has not ſupported it in the perfection in which he found it.

III. The characters of Corneille are true, though they are not common: The characters of Racine are not true, but only ſo far forth as they are common.

IV. Sometimes the characters of Corneille, are, in ſome reſpects, falſe and unnatural, in that they are noble and ſingular: Thoſe of Racine are often, in ſome reſpects, low, on account of their being natural and ordinary.

V. He that has a noble heart would chuſe to reſemble the heroes of Corneille; He that has a little heart is pleaſed to find his own reſemblance in the heroes of Racine.

VI. We carry, from hearing the pieces of the One, a deſire to be virtuous: And we carry the pleaſure of finding men like ourſelves in foibles and weakneſſes, from the pieces of the Other.

VII. The Tender and the Graceful of Racine is ſometimes to be found in Corneille: The Grand and Sublime of Corneille is never to be found in Racine.

VIII. Racine has painted only the French and the preſent age, even when he deſigned to paint another age, and other nations: We ſee in Corneille, all thoſe ages and all thoſe nations, that he intended to paint.

IX.

two citizens were vaſtly delighted: and one of them, at parting, ſtopt Boileau with this

IX. The number of the pieces of Corneille is much greater than that of Racine: Corneille, notwithſtanding, has made fewer tautologies and repetitions than Racine has made.

X. In the paſſages where the verſification of Corneille is good, it is more bold, more noble, and, at the ſame time, as pure and as finiſhed as that of Racine; but it is not preſerved in this degree of beauty; and that of Racine is always equally ſupported.

XI. Authors inferior to Racine have written ſucceſsfully after him, in his own way: No author, not even Racine himſelf, dared to attempt, after Corneille, that kind of writing which was peculiar to him.

This compariſon, of the juſtneſs of which the reader is left to judge, is ſaid greatly to have irritated Boileau, the invariable friend and defender of Racine. It may be remarked, that Boileau had mentioned Fontenelle with contempt, in a ſtrange ſtanza that originally concluded his Ode to the King, at preſent omitted. Theſe were the lines:

J' aime mieux, nouvel Icare,
Dans les airs cherchant Pindare,
Tomber du ciel le plus haut;
Que loué de Fontenelle,
Razer, craintive hirondelle,
La terre, comme Perault.

This ode was parodied in France; but not with ſuch incomparable humour, as by our Prior, in England.

To theſe remarks of Fontenelle may be added what Voltaire ſays, with his uſual vivacity and brevity; "Corneille alone formed himſelf; but Louis XIV. Colbert, Sophocles, and Euripides, all of them contributed to form Racine."

compliment, "I have travelled with Doctors of the Sorbonne, and even with Religious; but I never heard ſo many fine things ſaid before; *en verite vous parlez cent fois mieux qu' un* PREDICATEUR."

IT is but juſtice to add, that the fourteen ſucceeding verſes in the poem before us, containing the character of a TRUE CRITIC, are ſuperior to any thing in Boileau's Art of Poetry: from which, however, POPE has borrowed many obſervations.

37. The mighty STAGYRITE firſt, left the ſhore,
Spread all his ſails, and durſt the deep explore.
He ſteer'd ſecurely, and diſcover'd far,
Led by the light of the Mæonian ſtar *.

A NOBLE and juſt character of the firſt and the beſt of critics! And ſufficient to repreſs the faſhionable and nauſeous petulance of ſeveral impertinent moderns, who have attempted to diſcredit this great and uſeful writer. Whoever ſurveys the variety and perfection of his productions, all delivered in the chaſteſt ſtyle, in the cleareſt order, and the moſt pregnant brevity, is amazed at the immenſity of his genius. His logic, however at preſent neglected for thoſe redundant and verboſe ſyſtems, which took their riſe from Locke's Eſſay on the Human Underſtanding, is a mighty effort of the mind: in which are diſcovered the principal ſources of the art of reaſoning, and the dependencies of one thought on another; and where, by the different combinations he hath made of all the forms the underſtanding can aſſume in reaſoning, which he hath traced for it, he hath ſo cloſely confined it, that it cannot depart from them, without arguing inconſequentially. His Phyſics contain many uſeful obſervations, particularly his Hiſtory of Animals; to aſſiſt him in which, Alexander gave orders, that creatures of different climates and countries ſhould, at a great expence, be brought to him, to paſs under his inſpection. His Morals are perhaps the pureſt ſyſtem in antiquity. His Politics are a moſt valuable monument of the civil wiſdom of the ancients; as they preſerve to us the deſcription of ſeveral governments, and particularly of Crete and Carthage, that otherwiſe would have been unknown. But of all his compoſitions, his Rhetoric and Poetics are moſt complete. No writer has ſhewn a greater penetration into the receſſes of the human heart, than this philoſopher, in the ſecond book of his Rhetoric; where he treats of the different manners and paſſions, that diſtinguiſh each different age and condition of man; and from whence Horace plainly took his famous deſcription, in the Art of Poetry*. La Bruyere, Rochefoucault, and Montaigne himſelf, are not to be compared to him in this reſpect. No ſucceeding writer on eloquence, not even Tully, has added any thing new or important on this ſubject. His Poetics, which I ſuppoſe are here by Pope chiefly referred to, ſeem to have been written for the uſe of that prince, with whoſe education Ariſtotle was honoured, to give him a juſt taſte in reading Homer and the tragedians: to judge properly of which, was then thought no unneceſſary accompliſhment in the character of a prince. To attempt to underſtand poetry without having diligently digeſted this treatiſe, would be as abſurd and impoſſible, as to pretend to a ſkill in geometry, without having ſtudied Euclid. The fourteenth, fifteenth, and ſixteenth chapters, wherein he has pointed out the propereſt methods of exciting TERROR and PITY, convince us, that he was intimately acquainted with thoſe objects, which moſt forcibly affect the heart. The prime excellence of this precious treatiſe is the ſcholaſtic preciſion, and philoſophical cloſeneſs, with which the ſubject is handled, without any addreſs to the paſſions, or imagination. It is to be lamented, that the part of the Poetics in which he had given precepts for comedy, did not likewiſe deſcend to poſterity.

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* Ver. 646.

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* Ver. 157.

38. **Horace ſtill charms with graceful negligence,**
And without method talks us into ſenſe [*].

THE vulgar notion, that Horace wrote his Epiſtle to the Piſos without method, has been lately confuted, as we hinted before. It is equally falſe that, that epiſtle contains a complete Art of Poetry; it being ſolely confined to the ſtate and defects of the Roman drama. The tranſitions in the writings of Horace, are ſome of the moſt exquiſite ſtrokes of his art: many of them paſs at preſent unobſerved: and that his cotemporaries were equally blind to this beauty, he himſelf complains, though with a ſeeming irony,

> Cum lamentamur non APPARERE labores
> Noſtros, et TENUI deducta poemata filo [†].

IT ſeems alſo to be another common miſtake, that one of Horace's characteriſtics is the SUBLIME: of which indeed he has given a very few ſtrokes, and thoſe taken

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[*] Ver. 654.

[†] Epiſt. I. ver. 224. lib. 2.

from Pindar, and, probably, from Alcæus *. His excellence lay in exquiſite obſervations on human life, and in touching the foibles of mankind with delicacy and urbanity. 'Tis eaſy to perceive this moral † turn in all his

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* "De Horatio quidem ita ſentimus; ſi Græcorum Lyrica extarent, futurum, ut illius furta quamplurima deprehenderentur: qui tamen imitatores *ſervum pecus* appellare non dubitarit.——Ex Alcæo, ut opinor, [Horatii] multa, &c." *Scaliger. Poet. L. 5. c. 7.*

† It was this turn of mind, which, if I am not deceived, made Horace more fond of Euripides than of Sophocles; at leaſt if we may judge from his more frequent alluſions to the works of the latter than of the former. The diſpute about the burying of Ajax is the only paſſage of Sophocles alluded to in his works. Sat. iii. b. ii. 187. But to the works of Euripides there are many: ſuch as the ſacrifice of Iphigenia in the ſame epiſtle; the dialogue between Bacchus and Pentheus, at the end of 16 epiſ. of the 1ſt book; and the alluſion to the quarrel of Zethus and Amphion, epiſ. 18 book i. In the Art of Poetry the examples are chiefly taken from the pieces of Euripides;

> Sit *Medea* ferox invictaque, flebilis *Ino*,
> Perfidus *Ixion*, Io vaga, triſtis *Oreſtes*.

And again,

> Telephus et Peleus, &c.—and, Telephe, vel Peleu—

Perhaps he had his favourite Euripides in his head, when he mentioned a capital fault in the unravelling a juſt drama;

> Nec Deus interſit, &c. ——.

for

his compoſitions: the writer of the epiſtles is diſcerned in the odes. Elegance, not ſublimity, was his grand characteriſtic. Horace is the moſt popular author of all antiquity; the reaſon is, becauſe he abounds in images drawn from familiar life, and in remarks, that "come home to mens buſineſs "and boſoms." Hence he is more frequently quoted and alluded to, than any poet of a higher caſt.

> 39. See Dionysius Homer's thoughts refine,
> And call new beauties forth from ev'ry line *.

These proſaic lines, this ſpiritleſs eulogy are much below the merit of the critic whom they

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for Euripides is frequently cenſured for his conduct in this particular.

Rem tibi Socraticæ poterunt oſtendere chartæ,

is alſo a line that puts one in mind of the friend and companion whom Socrates is ſaid even to have aſſiſted in his plays. And if it were not too great a refinement, I would add, that this line

Non ſatis eſt *pulchra* eſſe poemata *dulcia* ſunto,

evidently points out the two known *characteriſtics* of the two great Tragedians, and gives the preference to his ſuppoſed favourite.

[*] Ver. 665.

they are intended to celebrate. POPE ſeems here rather to have conſidered Dionyſius as the author only of reflections concerning Homer; and to have in ſome meaſure overlooked, or at leaſt not to have ſufficiently inſiſted on, his moſt excellent book, ΠΕΡΙ ΣΥΝΘΗΣΕΩΣ ΟΝΟΜΑΤΩΝ, in which he has unfolded all the ſecret arts that render compoſition harmonious. One part of this diſcourſe, I mean from the beginning of the twenty-firſt to the end of the twenty-fourth Section, is perhaps one of the moſt uſeful pieces of criticiſm extant. He there diſcuſſes the three different ſpecies of compoſition; which he divides into the NERVOUS and AUSTERE, the SMOOTH and FLORID, and the MIDDLE, which partakes of the nature of the two others. As examples of the firſt ſpecies, he mentions Antimachus and Empedocles in heroics, Pindar in lyric, Æſchylus in tragic poetry, and Thucydides in hiſtory. As examples of the ſecond, he produces Heſiod as a writer in heroics; Sappho, Anacreon, and Simonides, in lyric; Euripides

ONLY, among tragic writers; among the hiſtorians, Ephorus, and Theopompus; and Iſocrates, among the rhetoricians: all theſe, ſays he, have uſed words that are ΛΕΙΑ, και ΜΑΛΑΚΑ, και ΠΑΡΘΕΝΩΠΑ. The writers which he alleges as inſtances of the third ſpecies, who have happily blended the two other ſpecies of compoſition, and who are the moſt complete models of ſtyle, are Homer, in epic poetry; Steſichorus and Alcæus, in lyric; in tragic, Sophocles; in hiſtory, Herodotus; in eloquence, Demoſthenes; in philoſophy, Democritus, Plato, and Ariſtotle.

40. Fancy and art in gay PETRONIUS pleaſe,
The ſcholar's learning with the courtier's eaſe *.

FOR what merit Petronius ſhould be placed among uſeful critics, I could never diſcern. There are not above two or three pages, containing critical remarks, in his work: the chief merit of which is that of telling a ſtory with grace and eaſe. His own ſtyle is more

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* Ver. 668.

affected than even that of his cotemporaries, when the Auguſtan ſimplicity was laid aſide. Many of his metaphors are far-fetched, and mixed; of which this glaring inſtance may be alledged. "Neque concipere aut edere "partum mens poteſt, niſi ingenti flumine "literarum inundata*:" where animal conception and delivery, are confounded with vegetable production. His character of Horace, however celebrated, and ſo often quoted as to become nauſeous, "Horatii *curioſa fœ-* "*licitas*," is ſurely a very unclaſſical inverſion; for he ought to have called it the *happy careſulneſs* of Horace, rather than his *careful happineſs*. I ſhall obſerve by the way, that the copy of this author found ſome years ago, bears many ſignatures of its ſpurioufneſs, and particularly of its being forged by a Frenchman. For we have this expreſſion, "ad CASTELLA ſeſe receperunt," that is, "to their CHATEAUX," inſtead of "ad *Villas*."

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[*] Pag. 109. Ed. Amſtæl. 1663.

41. In grave QUINTILIAN's copious work we find
The juſteſt rules, and cleareſt method join'd *.

To commend Quintilian barely for his method, and to inſiſt merely on this excellence, is below the merit of one of the moſt rational and elegant of Roman writers. Conſidering the nature of Quintilian's ſubject, he afforded copious matter, for a more appropriated and poetical character. No author ever adorned a ſcientifical treatiſe with ſo many beautiful metaphors. Quintilian was found in the bottom of a tower of the monaſtery of St. Gal, by Poggius; as appears by one of his letters dated 1417, written from Conſtance, when the council was then ſitting. The monaſtery was about twenty miles from that city. Silius Italicus, and Valerius Flaccus, were found at the ſame time and place. A hiſtory of the manner in which the manuſcripts of ancient authors were found, would be an entertaining work to perſons of literary curioſity.

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* Ver. 669.

42. Thee bold LONGINUS all the Nine inſpire,
And bleſs their critic with a poet's fire *.

THIS abrupt addreſs to Longinus is more ſpirited and ſtriking, and more ſuitable to the character of the perſon addreſſed, than if he had coldly ſpoken of him in the third perſon. The taſte and ſenſibility of Longinus were exquiſite; but his obſervations are too general, and his method too looſe. The preciſion of the true philoſophical critic is loſt in the declamation of the florid rhetorician. Inſtead of ſhewing for what reaſon a ſentiment or image is SUBLIME, and diſcovering the ſecret power by which they affect a reader with pleaſure, he is ever intent on producing ſomething SUBLIME *himſelf*, and ſtrokes of his *own* eloquence. Inſtead of pointing out the foundation of the grandeur of Homer's imagery, where he deſcribes the motion of Neptune, the critic is endeavouring to rival the poet, by ſaying that, " there " was not room enough in the whole earth;

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* Ver. 676.

" to take ſuch another ſtep." He ſhould have ſhewn why the ſpeech of Phaeton to his ſon, in a fragment of Euripides, was ſo lively and picturesque: inſtead of which he ardently exclaims, " would not you ſay, that " the ſoul of the writer aſcended the chariot " with the driver, and was whirled along " in the ſame flight and danger with the " rapid horſes?" We have lately ſeen a juſt ſpecimen of the genuine method of criticiſing, in Mr. Harris's accurate Diſcourſe on Poetry, Painting, and Muſic. I have frequently wondered, that Longinus, who mentions Tully, ſhould have taken no notice of Virgil. I ſuppoſe he thought him only a ſervile copier of the Greeks.

43. From the ſame foes, at laſt, both felt their doom,
And the ſame age ſaw learning fall and Rome [*].

" 'TWAS the fate of Rome to have ſcarce an intermediate age, or ſingle period of time, between the riſe of arts and fall of liberty. No ſooner had that nation begun to loſe the roughneſs and barbarity of their manners, and learn of Greece to form their heroes, their orators, and poets on a right model, than by their unjuſt attempt upon the liberty of the world, they juſtly loſt their own. With their liberty, they loſt not only their force of eloquence, but even their ſtyle and language itſelf. The poets who afterwards aroſe among them, were mere unnatural and forced plants. Their TWO moſt finiſhed, who came laſt, and cloſed the ſcene, were plainly ſuch as had ſeen the days of liberty, and felt the ſad effects of its departure *."

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[*] Ver. 686.

SHAFTESBURY proceeds to obſerve, that when deſpotiſm was fully eſtabliſhed, not a ſtatue, picture, or medal, not a tolerable piece of architecture, afterwards appeared.— And it was, I may add, the opinion of Longinus, and Addiſon, who adopted it from him, that arbitrary governments were pernicious to the fine arts, as well as to the ſciences. Modern hiſtory, however, has afford-

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* ADVICE to an Auth. vol. i. pag. 148. Edit. 12mo.

[illegible] (Tacitus?) [illegible]

ed an example to the contrary. Painting, ſculpture, and muſic, have been ſeen to arrive to a high perfection in Rome, notwithſtanding the ſlavery and ſuperſtition that reign there: nay, ſuperſtition itſelf has been highly productive of theſe fine arts; for with what enthuſiaſm muſt a popiſh painter work for an altar-piece? There have been inſtances of painters, who before they began to work, have always received the ſacrament. Neither Dante, Arioſto, nor Taſſo, flouriſhed in free governments; and it ſeems * chimerical to aſſert, that Milton would never have written his Paradiſe Loſt, if he had not ſeen monarchy deſtroyed, and the ſtate thrown into diſorder. Michael Angelo, Raphael, and Julio Romano, lived in deſpotic ſtates. The fine arts, in ſhort, are naturally attendant upon power and luxury. But the ſciences require unlimited freedom, to raiſe them to their full vigour and growth. In a MONARCHY, there may be poets, painters, and

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* See ENQUIRY into the Life and Writings of Homer, Sect. v, pag. 67.

muſicians; but orators, hiſtorians, and philoſophers, can exiſt in a Republic alone.

44. A ſecond deluge learning thus o'er-run,
And the monks finiſh'd what the Goths begun *.

Every cuſtom and opinion that can degrade and deform humanity, was to be found in the times here alluded to. The moſt cruel tyranny, and the groſſeſt ſuperſtition, reigned without controul. Men ſeemed to have loſt not only the light of learning, but of their common reaſon. Duels, divinations, the ordeal, and all the oppreſſive cuſtoms of the feudal laws, were univerſally practiſed: witchcraft, poſſeſſions, revelations, and aſtrology †, were generally believed. The ‡ clergy

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* Ver. 692.

† Even ſo late as the reign of Charles V. we are informed by Chriſtana of Piſa, that her father, who was the king's aſtrologer, foretold his death to a moment, in the year 1380. This aſtrologer was ſo highly in favour, and eſteemed of ſuch importance, as to have a monthly penſion of an hundred livres; a conſiderable ſum for that time.

‡ They celebrated in many churches, particularly at Rouen, what was called, the Feast of the Ass. On this occaſion, the Ass, finely dreſt, was brought before the altar, and they ſung before him this elegant anthem, "*Eh eh eh Sire* Ane! "*eh eh eh Sire* Ane!"

gy were ſo ignorant, that in ſome of the moſt ſolemn acts of ſynods, ſuch words as theſe are to be found: "*As my lord biſhop* "*cannot write himſelf, at his requeſt I have* "*ſubſcribed.*" They were at that time ſo profligate, as to publiſh Abſolutions for any one who had killed his father, mother, ſiſter, or wife; or had committed the moſt enormous pollutions. On a ſurvey of theſe abſurd abominations, one is apt to cry out in the emphatical words of Lucretius,

Quæ procul a NOBIS flectat Fortuna gubernans!

But we may reſt ſecure, if the obſervation of an acute writer be true, who ſays, "Europe will perhaps behold ages of a bad taſte, but will never again relapſe into barbariſm. The ſole invention of printing has forbidden that event. The only ſparks of literature that then remained, were to be found among the mahometans, and not the chriſtians. It was from the ARABIANS that we received aſtronomy, chemiſtry, medicine, algebra, and arithmetic. Albategni, a Saracen, ſome of whoſe manuſcripts are now repoſited in the Bodleian library at Oxford, made aſtronomical obſervations in the year 880. Our Almanack, AL-MANAC, is an Arabic word. The great church at Cordova in Spain, where the Saracens kept a magnificent court, is a monument of their ſkill in architecture. The game of cheſs, that admirable effort of the human mind, was by them invented; as were tilts and tournaments. Averroes tranſlated, and commented upon, the greateſt part of Ariſtotle's works *, and was the introducer of that author's philoſophy into the † weſt. It was Gerbert, who, in the reign of Hugh Capet, is ſaid to have introduced into France, the Arabian and Indian cypher: for the Arabians had borrowed from the Indians this manner of computing, and

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* I have ſeen a tranſlation of his Comment on the Poetics, with this title, "AVERROYS Summa in Ariſtotelis Poeticam; ex Arabico ſermone in Latinum traducta ab Hermano Alemano. Præmittitur Determinatio IBINROSDIN [*another Arabian writer*] in Poetria Ariſtotelis. Venetiis, apud Georgium Arrivabenum, 1515."

† From Sadi, an Arabian Poet, Milton is ſaid to have taken the grand idea of the bridge over chaos.

Gerbert learned it from the Saracens, when he made a journey into Spain. Gerbert alſo undertook to make the firſt clock, the motion of which was regulated by a balance; which method was made uſe of till the year 1650, when they began to place a pendulum inſtead of the balance. "Can it be believed, ſays Mr. Henault, that there ever was ſo little intercourſe between the provinces of France, that an abbot of Clugni, being invited by Bouchard Count of Paris, to bring his Religious to St. Maurdes-Foſſés, excuſed himſelf from making ſo long a journey, into a country UNKNOWN, and to which he was ſo much a STRANGER?" Charlemagne, indeed, two centuries before this laſt mentioned time, had endeavoured to bring civility and learning into France: he introduced the Gregorian chant, and eſtabliſhed a * ſchool in his palace, where the famous Alcuin, whom he invited from England, inſtructed the

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* He is ſaid to have founded the univerſity of Paris. Twyne's Antiq. Acad. Oxon. Apolog. edit. 1608. pag. 158, et ſeq.

Youth. Each of the members of this academy took a particular name; and Charlemagne himſelf, who did it the honour to become one of it's members, aſſumed that of David. This attempt to civilize his barbarous ſubjects, was as arduous, and worthy his great genius, as his noble project to open a communication between the Ocean and the Euxine by ſea, and to join the Rhine to the Danube by a canal.

45. At length ERASMUS, that great, injur'd name,
(The glory of the prieſthood, and the ſhame!)
Stem'd the wild torrent of a barb'rous age,
And drove thoſe holy Vandals off the ſtage[*].

IT were to be wiſhed, our author had drawn a larger and fuller portrait of this wonderful man, of whom he appears to have been ſo fond, as to declare in the Letters[†], that he had ſome deſign of writing his life in latin. I call Eraſmus a wonderful man, not only on account of the variety, and claſſical purity of his works, but of that penetration, that ſtrong and acute ſenſe, which enabled him to pierce through the abſurdities of the times, and expoſe them with ſuch poignant ridicule, and attic elegance.* A work of humour, and of humour directed to expoſe the prieſts, in that age, was indeed a prodigy. The irony of the Encomium on Folly has never been excelled. Eraſmus, though a commentator, had taſte; and tho' a catholic, had charity. His learning was enlivened with wit; and his orthodoxy was tempered with moderation. He was never dazzled with what was called ERUDITION; or miſled by that blind and undiſtinguiſhing veneration which was naturally paid to the ancients, on the firſt diſcovery of their writings. By his CICERONIANUS, he repreſſed the affectation of imitating Tully's manner of expreſſion, in every ſpecies of compoſition. In his ECCLESIASTES, very excellent rules are laid down for preaching. In his DIALOGUES, the ſuperſtitions of the Romiſh church are expoſed with all the pleaſantry of Lucian: an author, to whom his genius bore great reſemblance;

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[*] Ver. 694.

[†] Vol. vii. Pag. 232.

and ſome of thoſe dialogues he has tranſlated with their original ſpirit. Indeed, among the many tranſlators of Greek authors who flouriſhed at that time, Eraſmus ſeems to have been in all reſpects the moſt eminent. To him was the reſtoration of literature principally owing. More than one prince ſollicited his friendſhip, and invited him to their courts. We ſee in a letter of Eraſmus, written in the year 1516, that Francis I. who ſhared with Leo X. the glory of reviving ſciences and arts in Europe, having declared to Petit his confeſſor, that he intended to bring into France the moſt learned men he could find, Petit had charged Budæus, and Cop the royal phyſician, to write to Eraſmus, to engage him to ſettle in France: that Stephen Poncher, embaſſador from the king at Bruſſels, preſſed him ſtill more; but that Eraſmus made his excuſes, becauſe his catholic majeſty Charles V. had retained him in the Low-countries. The life of Eraſmus, which deſerves the fineſt pen, has been wretchedly and frigidly written by Knight; although, indeed, the materials he has collected are curious and uſeful.

> 46. But ſee! each muſe in Leo's golden days,
> Starts from her trance, and trims her wither'd bays:
> Rome's ancient Genius, o'er its ruins ſpread,
> Shakes off the duſt, and rears his rev'rend head[*],

HISTORY has recorded five ages of the world, in which the human mind has exerted itſelf in an extraordinary manner; and in which it's productions in literature and the fine arts have arrived at a perfection, not equalled in other periods. The FIRST, is the age of Philip and Alexander; about which time flouriſhed Socrates, Plato, Demoſthenes, Ariſtotle, Lyſippus, Apelles, Phidias, Praxiteles, Thucydides, Xenophon, Æſchylus, Euripides, Sophocles, Ariſtophanes, Menander, Philemon. The SECOND age, which has never yet been ſufficiently taken notice of, was that of Ptolomy Philadelphus, king of Ægypt; in which appeared Lycophron, Aratus, Nicander, Apollonius Rhodius, Theocritus, Callimachus,

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[*] Ver. 698.

Eratoſthenes, Philichus, Eriſiſtratus the phyſician, Timæus the hiſtorian, Cleanthes, Diogenes the painter, and Soſtrates the architect. This prince, from his love of learning, commanded the Old Teſtament to be tranſlated into Greek. The THIRD age is that of Julius Cæſar, and Auguſtus; marked with the illuſtrious names of Laberius, Catullus, Lucretius, Cicero, Livy, Varro, Virgil, Horace, Propertius, Tibullus, Ovid, Phædrus, Vitruvius, Dioſcorides. The FOURTH age was that of Julius II. and Leo X. which produced, Arioſto, Taſſo, Fracaſtorius, Sannazarius, Vida, Bembo, Sadolet, Machiavel, Guiccardin, Michael Angelo, Raphael, Titian. The FIFTH age, is that of Louis XIV. in France, and of king William and queen Anne in England: in which, or thereabouts, are to be found, Corneille, Moliere, Racine, Boileau, Fontaine, Boſſuet, Rochefoucault, Paſchal, Bourdaloue, Patru, Malbranche, De Retz, Bruyere, St. Real, Fenelon, Lully, Le Sæur, Pouſſin, La Brun, Puget, Theodon, Gerardon, Edelinck, Nanteuill,

teuill, * Perrault, Dryden, Tillotſon, Temple, POPE, Addiſon, Garth, Congreve, Rowe, Prior, Lee, Swift, Bolingbroke, Atterbury, Boyle, Locke, Newton, Clarke, Kneller, Thornhill, Jarvas, Purcell, Mead, Friend.

CONCERNING the particular encouragement given by Leo X. to polite literature, and the fine arts, I forbear to enlarge; becauſe a friend of mine is at preſent engaged in writing, THE HISTORY OF THE AGE OF LEO X. It is a noble period, and full of thoſe moſt important events, which have had the greateſt influence on human affairs. Such as the diſcovery of the Weſt-Indies, by the Spaniards, and of a paſſage to the Eaſt, by the Portugueze: the invention of printing; the reformation of religion; with many others: all which will be inſiſted upon at large, and their conſequences diſplayed. I ſhall only here tranſiently obſerve, that ſome efforts to emerge from barbarity had long before this time appeared in Italy.

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* The Architect.

Dante wrote his ſublime * and original poem, which is a kind of ſatirical epic, and which abounds in images and ſentiments almoſt worthy of Homer, but whoſe works he had never ſeen, about the year 1310. Giotto the diſciple of Cimabue, the friend of Dante, and ſubject of his praiſes, was employed, about the ſame time, by Benedict XI. and a picture of moſaic work done by him, over the gate of St. Peter's church at Rome, is ſtill remaining. A Tuſcan, called Guy of Arezzo, invented the muſical notes in uſe at preſent: and Bruneleſchi built palaces at Florence, in the ſtyle of ancient architecture. Soon afterwards, Boccace and Petrarch poliſhed, and fixed the

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* See particularly the beginning of the third canto of the INFERNO, as alſo the beginning of the ſixth: particularly the inſcription over the gate of Hell;

> Per me ſi va nella città dolente;
> Per me ſi va nell' eterno dolor, &c.
> Laſciate ogni ſperanza, voi, che entrate.

Whence Milton,

> ——Hope never comes,
> That comes to all——

ſtandard of, the Italian language *. To Petrarch the honour is generally attributed of having reſtored † the elegance of the Latin tongue; particularly in poetry. But a late acute ſearcher into antiquity, whoſe death is juſtly lamented, the learned Scipio Maffei, has informed us ‡ in a curious paſſage, that this was not ſo much owing to Petrarch, as to Albertino Muſſato, a native of Padua: with whoſe merit the learned ſeem not to be ſufficiently acquainted. Muſſato died very old,

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* "Veggiamo in un medeſimo prodreſſo di tempo (dal regno principalmente dell' una, e dell' altra Sicilia, e poi della Lombardia, e de vari, e diſtinti luoghi d'Italia) ſorgere ſcrittori, i quali anno favella con Dante, Petrarcha, Boccacio, ed altri Toſcani autori commune, e con loro anche commune l' autorità, da ogni regolator dalla lingua riconoſciuta, i quali, tra molti altri, furrono Guidotto Bologneſe, Marco Polo Veneziano, Pier Creſcenzia da Bologna, Guido Giudice Meſſineſe, Giacopo Colonna Romano, Federico II. imperadore, Pier delle Vigne Capoano, Benvenuto da Imola, Fra Jacopone da Todi, Oneſto Bologneſe, Guido Guiſlieri, Semprebene, Fabrovio, Guido Guiſlieri, Jacopo della Lana, Giotto Mantovano." Gravina della Rag. Poet. lib. ii. p. 170.

† When Petrarch wrote his Africa, he had not ſee Silius Italicus.

‡ TEATRO Italiano. In Verona, 1723. tom. i. p. 4.

old, after having borne the greateſt offices in his country, in the year 1329, that is to ſay, thirty-five years before Petrarch. He wrote not only many books of a hiſtory of his own times, but alſo an heroic poem on the ſiege of Padua, by the Veroneſe, under the great Can; together with eclogues, elegies, epiſtles in verſe, and an Ovidian Cento. However, to form a full judgment in this caſe, one need only peruſe his two latin tragedies entitled ECCERINIS, and ACHILLES, which he compoſed in the ſtyle and manner of Seneca: and which were the firſt regular and perfect dramas, that are to be found ſince the barbarous and obſcure ages.

47. Immortal VIDA; on whoſe honour'd brow
The Poet's bays, and Critic's ivy grow *.

THE merits of Vida ſeem not to have been particularly attended to in England, till POPE had beſtowed this commendation upon him: although the Poetics had been correctly pub-

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* Ver. 706.

liſhed at Oxford, by Baſil Kennet, ſome time before. The SILKWORMS of Vida are written with claſſical purity, and with a juſt mixture of the ſtyles of Lucretius and Virgil. It was a happy choice to write a poem on CHESS; nor is the execution leſs happy. The various ſtratagems, and manifold intricacies of this ingenious game, ſo difficult to be deſcribed in latin, are here expreſſed with the greateſt perſpicuity and elegance; ſo that perhaps the game might be learned from this deſcription. Amidſt many proſaic flatneſſes, there are many fine ſtrokes in the CHRISTIAD: particularly, his angels, with reſpect to their perſons and inſignia, are drawn with that dignity, which we ſo much admire in Milton; who ſeems to have had his eye on thoſe paſſages. * Gravina applauds Vida, for having found out a method to introduce the whole hiſtory of our Saviour's life, by putting it into the mouth of St. Joſeph and St. John, who relate it to Pilate. But ſurely this ſpeech, conſiſting

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* Della Ragion. Poet. pag. 127.

of as many lines as that of Dido to Æneas, was too long to be made on ſuch an occaſion; when Chriſt was brought before the tribunal of Pilate, to be judged and condemned to death. The Poetics are perhaps the moſt perfect of his compoſitions: they are excellently tranſlated by Pitt. Vida had formed himſelf upon Virgil, who is therefore his hero: he has too much depreciated Homer. Although his precepts principally regard epic poetry, yet many of them are applicable to every ſpecies of compoſition. This poem has the praiſe of being one of the * firſt, if not the very firſt, pieces of criticiſm, that appeared in Italy, ſince the revival of learning: for it was finiſhed, as is evident from a ſhort advertiſement prefixed to it, in the year 1520. It is remarkable, that moſt of the great poets about this time, wrote an Art of Poetry. Triſſino, a name reſpected for giving to Europe the firſt re-

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* Victorius's latin tranſlation of Ariſtotle's Poetics, was publiſhed at Florence, 1560. Caſtlevetro's italian one at Vienna, 1570.

gular epic poem, and for firſt daring to throw off the bondage of rhyme, publiſhed at Vicenza, in the year 1529, DELLA POETICA, *diviſioni quattro*, ſeveral years before his Italia Liberata. We have of Fracaſtorius, NAUGERIUS, *ſive de Poetica dialogus*, Venetiis, 1555. Minturnus, DE POETA, *libri ſex*, appeared at Venice 1559. Bernardo Taſſo, the father of Torquato, and author of an epic poem entitled L'Amadigi, wrote RAGIONAMENTO *della Poeſia*, printed at Venice, 1562. And to pay the higheſt honour to criticiſm, the great Torquato Taſſo himſelf wrote DISCORSI *del Poema Eroico*, printed at Venice, 1587. Theſe diſcourſes are full of learning and taſte. But I muſt not omit a curious anecdote, which * Menage has given us in his Anti-Baillet; namely, that Sperone claimed theſe diſcourſes as his own: for he thus ſpeaks of them in one of his letters to Felice Paciotto; "Laudo voi infinitamente di voler ſcrivere

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* Tom. i. pag. 353.

della poetica; della quale interrogato molto fiate dal Taſſo *, e riſpondendogli io liberamente, ſi come ſoglio, egli n'a fatto un volume, e mandato al Signior Scipio Gonzaga per coſa ſua, e non mea: ma io ne chiarirò il mondo."

48. And BOILEAU ſtill in right of Horace ſways †.

MAY I be pardoned for declaring it as my opinion, that Boileau's is the beſt ‡ Art of Poetry extant? The brevity of his precepts, enlivened by proper imagery, the juſtneſs of his metaphors, the harmony of his numbers, as far as alexandrine lines will admit, the exactneſs of his method, the perſpicacity of his remarks, and the energy of his ſtyle, all duly conſidered, may render this opinion not unreaſonable. It is ſcarcely to be con-

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[*] It may be remarked, as an inſtance of Taſſo's JUDGEMENT, that he himſelf did not approve the epiſode of Sophronia and Olindo, ſo commonly cenſured.

[†] Ver. 715.

[‡] It was tranſlated into Portugueze verſe, by Count d'Ericeyra.

ceived, how much is comprehended in four ſhort cantos §. He that has well digeſted theſe, cannot be ſaid to be ignorant of any important rule of poetry. The tale of the phyſician turning architect, in the fourth canto, is told with vaſt pleaſantry. It is to this work Boileau owes his immortality: which was of the higheſt utility to his nation, in diffuſing a juſt way of thinking and writing; baniſhing every ſpecies of falſe wit, and introducing a general taſte for the manly ſimplicity of the antients, on whoſe writings this poet had formed his taſte. Boileau's chief talent was the DIDACTIC. His fancy was not the predominant faculty of his mind. Fontenelle has thus characteriſed him. "Il étoit grand & excellent verſificateur, pourvû cependant que cette louange ſe renferme dans ſes beaux jours, dont la différence avec les autres eſt bien marquée; & faiſoit ſouvent dire *Helas!* & *Hola!* mais il n'étoit pas grand poëte, ſi l'on entend par ce mot, comme on le doit, celui qui FAIT, qui INVENTE, qui CREE *."

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§ It is remarkable, Boileau declared he had never read Vida.

49. Such was the muſe, whoſe rules and practice tell,
"Nature's chief maſter-piece is writing well †."

THIS high panegyric procured to POPE the acquaintance, and afterwards, the conſtant friendſhip, of the duke of Buckingham: who, in his ESSAY here alluded to, has folowed the method of Boileau, in diſcourſing on the various ſpecies of poetry, to no other purpoſe than to manifeſt his own inferiority. The piece is, indeed, of the ſatyric, rather than of the preceptive, kind. The coldneſs and neglect with which this writer, formed only on the French critics, ſpeaks of Milton, muſt be conſidered as proofs of his want of critical diſcernment, or of critical courage. I can recollect no performance of Buckingham, that ſtamps him a true genius. His eputation was owing to his rank. In read-

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Œuvres de Fontenelle, Tom. iii. pag. 376. à Paris, 1752.

† Ver. 724.

ing his poems, one is apt to exclaim with our author,

> What woeful ſtuff this madrigal would be,
> In ſome ſtarv'd hackney ſonnetter or me?
> But let a LORD ONCE OWN the happy lines,
> How the wit brightens! how the ſtyle refines!
> Before his ſacred name flies every fault,
> And each exalted ſtanza teems with thought.

THE beſt part of Buckingham's ESSAY is that, in which he gives a ludicrous account of the plan of modern tragedy. I ſhould add, that his compliment to POPE, prefixed to his poems, contains a pleaſing picture of the ſedateneſs and retirement proper to age, after the tumults of public life; and by it's moral turn, breathes the ſpirit, if not of a poet, yet of an amiable old Man.

50. Such was ROSCOMMON *. —— —— ——

AN ESSAY on Tranſlated Verſe ſeems at firſt ſight to be a barren ſubject; yet Roſcommon has decorated it with many precepts

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* Ver. 726.

of utility and taſte, and enlivened it with a tale, in imitation of Boileau. It is indiſputably better written than the laſt-mentioned ESSAY. Roſcommon was more learned than Buckingham. He was bred under Bochart at Caen in Normandy. He had laid a deſign of forming a ſociety for the refining, and fixing the ſtandard of, our language: in which project, his intimate friend Dryden was a principal aſſiſtant. This was the firſt attempt of that ſort; and, I fear, we ſhall never ſee another ſet on foot in our days: even though Mr. Johnſon has lately given us ſo excellent a dictionary. It may be remarked to the praiſe of Roſcommon, that he was the firſt critic who had taſte and ſpirit enough *, publicly to

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* The editors of Milton have been curious in endeavouring to ſearch out who were the very firſt perſons that brought the Paradiſe Loſt into vogue and eſteem. The following is, I believe, the very firſt paſſage in which any public notice was taken of its excellence. It was written by Edward Philips, Milton's nephew, and who had been one of his ſcholars, in a treatiſe, entitled, Tractatulus de Carmine Dramatico Poetarum veterum; cui ſubjungitur compendioſa Enumeratio Poetarum. Londini, 1670. This was three years after the firſt publication

to praiſe the Paradiſe Loſt; with a noble encomium of which, and a rational recommendation of blank verſe, he concludes his performance. Fenton, in his Obſervations on Waller, has accurately delineated his character. "His imagination might have probably been more fruitful, and ſprightly, if his judgment had been leſs ſevere: but that ſeverity, delivered in a maſculine, clear, ſuccinct ſtyle, contributed to make him ſo eminent in the didactical manner, that no man with juſtice can affirm, he was ever equalled by any of our own nation, without confeſſing at the ſame time, that he is infe-

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cation of Paradiſe Loſt. The words follow, "Iohannes Miltonus, præter alia quæ ſcripſit elegantiſſima tum Anglicè tum Latinè, nuper publici juris fecit Paradiſum amiſſum, Poema, quod, ſive Sublimitatum Argumenti, ſive Leporem ſimul & Majeſtatem Styli, ſive Sublimitatem Inventionis, ſive Similitudines & Deſcriptiones quam maximè naturales reſpiciamus, verè Heroicum, ni fallor, audiet: Plurium enim ſuffragiis qui non neſciunt judicare, cenſetur Perfectionem hujus generis Poematis aſſecutum eſſe." From many circumſtances in the ſame Treatiſe, particularly his cenſure of rhyme, his great commendations of the beſt Italian poets, and of Spencer, their true ſon and *diſciple*, (and father of Milton) it is evident from whence this Philips imbibed his principles of criticiſm.

rior to none. In ſome other kinds of writing, his genius ſeems to have wanted fire to attain the point of perfection: but who can attain it*?"

51. Such late was WALSH, the muſe's judge and friend†.

IF POPE has here given too magnificent an elogy to Walſh, it muſt be attributed to friendſhip, rather than to judgment. Walſh was in general a flimzy and frigid writer. The Rambler calls his works PAGES OF INANITY. His three letters to POPE, however, are well written. His remarks on the nature of paſtoral poetry, on borrowing from the ancients, and againſt florid conceits, are worthy perusal‡. POPE owed much to Walſh: it was he who gave him a very important piece of advice, in his early youth; for he uſed to tell our author, that there was one way ſtill left open for him, by which he might excel any of his predeceſſors, which was, by CORRECTNESS; that though indeed

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[*] Edit. 12mo. pag. 136.

[†] Ver. 730.

[‡] Vol. vii. pag. 67. &c.

we had ſeveral great poets, we as yet could boaſt of none that were perfectly CORRECT; and that therefore, he adviſed him to make this quality his particular ſtudy.

CORRECTNESS is a vague term, frequently uſed without meaning and preciſion. It is perpetually the nauſeous cant of the French critics, and of their advocates and pupils, that the Engliſh writers are generally INCORRECT. If CORRECTNESS implies an abſence of petty faults, this perhaps may be granted. If it means, that, becauſe their tragedians have avoided the irregularities of Shakeſpeare, and have obſerved a juſter œconomy in their fables, therefore the Athalia, for inſtance, is preferable to Lear, the notion is groundleſs and abſurd. The Henriade* is

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* An epic poem in couplets! In the Geneva edition of the Henriade, we are informed of a curious anecdote, when it was printed at London, in 1726, in quarto, by ſubſcription, Mr. Dadiky, a Greek, and native of Smyrna, who at that time reſided in London, ſaw by chance the firſt leaf as it was printing, where was the following line:

Qui força les Francois à devenir heureux;

he

is free from any very groſs faults; but who will dare to rank it with the Paradiſe Loſt? The declamations with which ſome of their moſt perfect tragedies, even the beſt of Racine, abound, may be reckoned as contrary to the nature of that ſpecies of poetry, and as deſtructive of it's end, as the fools or grave-

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he immediately paid a viſit to the author, and ſaid to him, "I am of the country of Homer; he did not begin his "poems by a ſtroke of wit, by an enigma." The author immediately corrected the line; but I beg leave to add, that he did not correct many others of the ſame *modern* kind." Voltaire has dropt a remark in the laſt edition of his Eſſay on Epic Poetry, which is not indeed very favourable to the taſte of his countrymen, but is perfectly true and juſt, and which he ſeems to have forgotten in ſome of his late aſſertions:

"It muſt be owned, that it is more difficult for a Frenchman to ſucceed in epic poetry, than for any other perſon; but neither the conſtraint of rhyme, nor the dryneſs of our language is the cauſe of this difficulty. Shall I venture to name the cauſe? It is, *becauſe of all poliſhed nations, ours is the leaſt poetic.* The works in verſe, which are moſt in vogue in France, are pieces for the Theatre. Theſe pieces muſt be written in a ſtyle that approaches to that of converſation. Deſpreaux has treated only *Didactic* ſubjects, which require ſimplicity. It is well known, that exactneſs and elegance conſtitute the chief merit of his verſes and thoſe of Racine; and when Deſpreaux attempted a ſublime ode, he was no longer Deſpreaux. Theſe examples have accuſtomed the French to too uniform a march———."

diggers of Shakeſpeare. That the French may boaſt ſome excellent critics, particularly Boſſu, Boileau, Fenelon, and Brumoy, cannot be denied; but that theſe are ſufficient to form a taſte upon, without having recourſe to the genuine fountains of all polite literature, I mean the Grecian writers, no one but a ſuperficial ſcioliſt can allow.

I CONCLUDE theſe reflections with a remarkable fact. In no poliſhed nation, after criticiſm has been much ſtudied, and the rules of writing eſtabliſhed, has any very extraordinary work ever appeared. This has viſibly been the caſe, in Greece, in Rome, and in France; after Ariſtotle, Horace, and Boileau, had written their ARTS OF POETRY. In our own country, the rules of the drama, for inſtance, were never more completely underſtood than at preſent: yet what UNINTERESTING, though FAULTLESS, tragedies, have we lately ſeen? So much better is our judgment than our execution. How to account for the fact here mentioned, ed, adequately and juſtly, would be attended with all thoſe difficulties that await diſcuſſions relative to the productions of the human mind; and to the delicate and ſecret cauſes that influence them. Whether or no, the natural powers be not confined and debilitated by that timidity and caution which is occaſioned by a rigid regard to the dictates of art; or whether that philoſophical, that geometrical, and ſyſtematical ſpirit ſo much in vogue, which has ſpread itſelf from the ſciences even into polite literature, by conſulting only REASON, has not diminiſhed and deſtroyed SENTIMENT; and made our poets write from and to the HEAD rather than the HEART: Or whether, laſtly, when juſt models, from which the rules have neceſſarily been drawn, have once appeared, ſucceeding writers, by vainly and ambitiouſly ſtriving to ſurpaſs thoſe juſt models, and to ſhine and ſurpriſe, do not become ſtiff, and forced, and affected in their thoughts and diction.

SECT. IV.

Of the RAPE *of the* LOCK.

IF the Moderns have excelled the Antients in any ſpecies of writing, it ſeems to be in ſatire: and, particularly in that kind of ſatire, which is conveyed in the form of the epopee, a pleaſing vehicle of ſatire, ſeldom, if ever, uſed by the antients; for we know ſo little of the Margites of Homer, that it cannot be produced as an example. As the poet diſappears in this way of writing, and does not deliver the intended cenſure in his own proper perſon, the ſatire becomes more delicate, becauſe more oblique. Add to this, that a tale or ſtory more ſtrongly engages and intereſts the reader, than a ſeries of precepts or reproofs, or even of characters themſelves, however lively and natural. An heroi-comic poem my therefore be juſtly eſteemed the moſt excellent kind of ſatire.

THE invention of it is uſually aſcribed to Aleſſandro Taſſoni; who, in the year 1622, publiſhed at Paris, a poem compoſed by him, in a few months of the year 1611, entitled LA SECCHIA RAPITA, or *The Rape of the Bucket*. To avoid giving offence, it was firſt printed under the name of Androvini Meliſoni. It was afterwards reprinted at Venice, corrected, with the name of the author, and with ſome illuſtrations of Gaſparo Salviani. But the learned and curious Creſcembini, in his *Iſtoria della Volgar Poeſia* *, informs us, that it is doubtful whether the invention of the † heroi-comic poem ought to be aſcribed to Taſſoni, or to Franceſco Bracciolini, who wrote ‡ LO SCHERNO DEGLI DEI, which performance, though it was printed four years after LA SECCHIA, is nevertheleſs declared in an epiſtle prefixed, to have been written many years ſooner. The real ſubject of Taſſoni's poem was the war which the inhabitants of Modena declared againſt thoſe of Bologna, on the refuſal of the latter to reſtore to them ſome towns, which had been detained ever ſince the time of the emperor Frederic II. The author artfully made uſe of a popular tradition, according to which it was believed, that a certain wooden bucket, which is kept at Modena, in the treaſury of the cathedral, came from Bologna, and that it had been forcibly taken away by the Modeneſe. Creſcembini adds, that becauſe Taſſoni had ſeverely ridiculed the Bologneſe, Bartolomeo Bocchini, to revenge his countrymen, printed at Venice 1641, a tragico-heroi-comic poem, entitled LE PAZZIE DE SAVI, *overo*, IL LAMBERTACCIO, in which the Modeneſe are ſpoken of with much contempt. The Italians have a fine turn for works of humour, in which they abound. They have another poem of this ſpecies, called MALMANTILE RACQUISTATO, written by Lorenzo Lippi, in the year 1676, which Creſcembini * highly commends, calling it, "Spiritoſiſimo e legiadriſſimo poema giaco-

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* Lib. i. pag. 78. In Roma, per il Chracas, 1698.

† E tal Poeſia puo diffinirſi, e chiamarſi, immitazione d'azione ſeria fatto con riſo. Creſcembini, ibid.

‡ In Venetia, 1627. There is prefixed, by way of preface, a facetious dialogue betwixt Thalia and Urania.

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* Pag. 368. lib. v.

" ſo." It was afterwards reprinted at Florence 1688, with the uſeful annotations of Puccio Lamoni, a Florentine painter, who was himſelf no contemptible poet.

THE LUTRIN of Boileau was the ſecond remarkable poem, in which the Serious and Comic were happily blended. Boileau himſelf has given a circumſtantial account of what gave occaſion to this poem: which account, becauſe it is entertaining, and not printed in the common editions of his works, I will inſert at length. "I ſhall not here act like Arioſto, who frequently when he is going to relate the moſt abſurd ſtory in the world, ſolemnly proteſts it to be true, and ſupports it by the authority of archbiſhop Turpin. For my part I freely declare, the whole poem of the DESK is nothing but pure fiction; that it is all invented, even to the name itſelf of the place where the action paſſes. An odd occaſion gave riſe to this poem. In a company I was lately engaged in, the converſation turned upon epic poetry: every one delivered his opinion, according to his abilities; when mine was aſked, I confirmed what I had advanced in my Art of Poetry, that an heroic poem, to be truly excellent, ought to be charged with little MATTER, which it was the buſineſs of invention to ſupport and extend. The opinion was warmly conteſted: but after many reaſons for and againſt, it happened, as it generally does in this ſort of diſputes, that nobody was convinced, and that each continued in his own opinion. The heat of diſpute being over, we talked on other ſubjects; and laughed at the violence into which we had been betrayed, in diſcuſſing a queſtion of ſo little conſequence. We moralized on the folly of men who paſs almoſt their whole lives, in treating the greateſt trifles in a ſerious manner; and in making to themſelves an important affair of ſomething quite indifferent. To this purpoſe, a country gentleman related a famous quarrel, that had lately happened in a little church in his province, between the treaſurer and the chantor, the two principal dignitaries of that church, about the place in which a reading-deſk was to ſtand. We thought it a ridiculous affair. Upon this, one of the critics in company, who could not ſo ſoon forget our late diſpute, aſked me, if I, who thought ſo little MATTER neceſſary for an heroic poem, would undertake to write one on a quarrel ſo little abounding in incidents, as this of the two eccleſiaſtics? I ſaid, why not? before I had even reflected on the queſtion. This made the company laugh, and I could not help laughing with them; not in the leaſt imagining, that I ſhould ever be able to keep my word. But finding myſelf at leiſure in the evening, I revolved the ſubject in my mind, and having conſidered in every view the pleaſantry that it would admit of, I made twenty verſes which I ſhewed to my friends. They were diverted with this beginning. The pleaſure which I ſaw theſe gave them, induced me to write twenty more. Thus, from twenty verſes to twenty, I lengthened the work to near nine hundred. This is the whole hiſtory of the trifle I now offer to the public.——It is a new kind of burleſque, which I have introduced into our language; for as in the other kind of burleſque, that of Scarron, Dido and Æneas ſpoke like fiſh-women and porters, in this of mine, a * clock-maker and his wife talk like Dido and Æneas. I do not know whether my poem will have all the qualities requiſite to ſatisfy a reader: but I dare flatter myſelf, that it will at leaſt be allowed to have the grace of novelty; becauſe I do not conceive, that there are any works of this nature in our language; the DEFAITES DES BOUTS RIMES of Saraſin being rather a mere allegory than a poem, as this is."

ON a ſubject ſeemingly ſo unpromiſing and incapable of ornament, has Boileau found a method of raiſing a poem full of beautiful imagery; which appears like that magnificent city †, which the greateſt of princes cauſed to be built in a moraſs. Boileau has enlivened this piece with many unexpected incidents and entertaining epiſodes;

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* Altered afterwards to a BARBER.

† Peterſburg.

Maxima de nihilo naſcitur hiſtoria. Prop.

Particularly that of the Perruquier, in the ſecond canto, and of the Battle of the Books, in the fifth. The ſatire throughout is poignant, though polite, to the laſt degree. The indolence and luxury of the prieſts are ridiculed with the moſt artful delicacy. What a picture has he drawn of the chamber and bed of the treaſurer, where every thing was calculated to promote and preſerve inactivity and eaſe!

Dans le réduit obſcur d'un alcove enfoncée *
S'éleve un lit de plume a grands frais amaſſée.
Quatre rideaux pompeux, par un double contour,
En défendent l'entrée à la clarté du jour.
Là, parmi les douceurs d'un tranquille ſilence,
Regne ſur le duvet une heureuſe Indolence.
C'eſt là que Prélat, muni d'un déjeûner,
Dormant d'un leger ſomme, attendoit le dîner.
La jeuneſſe en ſa fleur brille ſur ſon viſage,
Son menton ſur ſon ſein deſcend a double etage:
Et ſon corps ramaſſé dans ſa courte groſſeur,
Fait gémir les couſſins ſous ſa molle épaiſſeur †,

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* Compare with this the account of the Canon fed by his Houſe-keeper, in Gil Blas.

† Chant. i.

The aſtoniſhment of Gilotin, the treaſurer's almoner, to find that his maſter intends to go out before dinner, is extremely natural; and his remonſtrances are inimitably droll and pertinent.

Lui montre le péril, que midi va ſonner;
Qu' il va faire, s'il ſort, refroidir le dîner.
Quelle fureur, dit-il, quel aveugle caprice,
Quand le dîner eſt prêt vous apelle a l' Office?
De votre dignité ſoûtenez mieux l'éclat.
Eſt-ce pour travailler que vous êtes Prélat?
A quoi bon ce dégoût & ce zele inutile?
Eſt-il donc pour jeûner Quatre temps, ou Vigile?
Reprenez vos eſprits, & ſouvenez-vous bien,
Qu'un dîner rechauffé ne valut jamais rien *.

How admirably is the character of an ignorant and eating prieſt, preſerved in this ſpeech of the ſleek and pampered Canon Evrard, one of the drones, who,

—— —— In that exhauſtleſs hive
On fat pluralities ſupinely thrive †!

Moi? dit-il, qu'à mon âge, Ecolier tout noveau,
J'aille pour un Lutrin me troubler le cerveau?

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* Chant. 1. † Ibis.

O le plaiſant conſeil ! non, non, ſongeons à vivre,
Vas maigrir, ſi tu veux, & ſecher ſur un Livre.
Pour moi, je lis la Bible autant que l'Alcoran :
Je ſai ce qu'un Fermier nous doit rendre par an :
Sur quelle vigne à Rheims nous avons hypothéque ;
Vingt muids, rangez chez moi, ſont ma Bibliothéque.
En plaçant un Pupitre on croit nous rabbaiſſer,
Mon bras ſeul, ſans Latin, ſaura le renverſer.
Que m'importe qu'Arnauld me condamne ou m'approuve ?
J'abbats ce qui me nuit par-tout où je le trouve.
C'eſt là mon ſentiment. A quoi bon tant d'apprêts ?
Du reſte, déjeunons, Meſſieurs, & buvons frais *.

His knowledge of the rents of his church, and of the mortgages belonging to it, his ſcorn of the pious and laborious Arnauld, his contempt of learning, and, above all, his ruling paſſion of good-eating, are ſtrokes highly comic. It is wonderful the eccleſiaſtics of France were not as much irritated by the publication of the LUTRIN as by the TARTUFFE of Moliere; which was ſuppreſſed by their intereſt, after it had been acted a few nights: although at the ſame time, a very profane farce was permitted to

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* Chant. iv.

have a long run. When Louis XIV. expreſſed to the prince of Condé, his wonder at the different fates of theſe two pieces, and aſked the reaſon of it, the prince anſwered, " In the farce, Religion *only* is ridiculed; but, Moliere in the Tartuffe, has attacked even the Priests."

Boileau has raiſed his ſubjects by many perſonifications; particularly, in the beginning of the ſixth canto, Piety ~~who had~~ retired to the great Carthuſian monaſtery on the Alps, is introduced as repairing to Paris, accompanied by Faith, Hope, and Charity, in order to make her complaint to Themis: to which may be added, the monſtrous figure of Chicanery, attended by Famine, Want, Sorrow, and Ruin, in the beginning of the fifth canto. The chief divinity that acts throughout the poem, is Discord; which goddeſs is repreſented as coming from a convent of Cordeliers. A fine ſtroke of ſatire; but imitated from the ſatyrical Arioſto, who makes Michael find Dis-

CORD in a cloiſter, inſtead of SILENCE, whom he there ſearched for in vain. NIGHT is alſo introduced as an actreſs with great propriety, in the third canto; where ſhe repairs to the famous old tower at Montlery, in order to find out an owl which ſhe may convey into the DESK, and which afterwards produces ſo ridiculous a conſternation. SLOTH is another principal perſonage: ſhe alſo is diſcovered in the dormitory of a monaſtery.

Les Plaiſirs nonchalans folâtrent alentour
L'un paitrit dans un coin l'embonpoint des Chanoines;
L'autre broye en riant le vermillon des Moines *.

The ſpeech ſhe afterwards makes has a peculiar beauty, as it ends in the middle of a line; and by that means ſhews her inability to proceed.

THE third heroi-comic poem was the DISPENSARY of Garth: a palpable imitation of the LUTRIN, and the beſt ſatire on the phyſicians extant, except the SANGRADO of Le Sage, who have indeed been the object

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* Chant. ii.

of almoſt every ſatiriſt. The behaviour and ſentiments of SLOTH, the firſt imaginary being that occurs, are almoſt literally tranſlated from Boileau: particularly the compliment that SLOTH pays to king William, whoſe actions diſturb her repoſe:

Or if ſome cloyſter's refuge I implore,
Where holy drones o'er dying tapers ſnore;
The peals of Naſſau's arms theſe eyes uncloſe,
Mine he moleſts, to give the world repoſe [*].

Je croyois, loin des lieux dont ce prince m'exile,
Que l'Egliſe, du moins, m'aſſûroit un azile.
Mais envain j'eſperois y regner ſans effroi:
Moines, Abbés, Prieurs, tout s'arme contre moi [†].

Garth, in ridiculing the clergy, ſpeaks of that order with more acrimony than Boileau, who merely laughs at them. But Garth was one of the free-thinking WITS at Button's. He has introduced many excellent parodies on the claſſics: among which I cannot forbear quoting one, which is an imitation of ſome paſſages, which the reader will remember, in Virgil's ſixth book, and where the circumſtances are happily inverted.

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[*] Cant. i.

[†] Chant. ii.

[*] Since, ſaid the ghoſt, with pity you'll attend,
Know, I'm Guiacum, once your firmeſt friend;
And on this barren beach, in diſcontent
Am doom'd to ſtay, 'till th' angry pow'rs relent.
Theſe ſpectres ſeam'd with ſcars that threaten here,
The victims of my late ill conduct are.
They vex with endleſs clamours my repoſe,
This wants his palate, that demands his noſe;
And here they execute ſtern Pluto's will,
And ply me every moment with a pill [†].

THIS author has been guilty of a ſtrange impropriety, which cannot be excuſed, in making the fury DISEASE talk like a critic, give rules of writing, and a panegyric on the beſt poets of the age [‡]. The deſcent into the earth in the ſixth canto, is a fine mixture of poetry and philoſophy; the hint is taken from the * SYPHILIS of Fracaſtorius. Garth's verſification is flowing and muſical; his ſtyle perſpicuous, and neat; and the poem in general abounds with ſallies of wit, and nervous ſatire.

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[*] Boileau ſays admirably of his phyſician, Chant. 4. Art. Poet.
Le rhume à ſon aſpect ſe change en pleuriſie;
Et par lui la migraine eſt bientôt phrénéſie.

[†] Cant. vi.

[‡] Cant. iv.

THE RAPE OF THE LOCK, now before us, is the fourth, and moſt excellent of the heroi-comic poems. The ſubject was a quarrel occaſioned by a little piece of gallantry of lord Petre, who, in a party of pleaſure, found means to cut off a favourite lock of Mrs. Arabella Fermour's hair. POPE was deſired to write it, in order to put an end to the quarrel it produced, by Mr. Caryl, who had been ſecretary to queen Mary, author of Sir Solomon Single a comedy, and of ſome tranſlations in Dryden's Miſcellanies. POPE was accuſtomed to ſay, "What I wrote faſteſt always pleaſed moſt." The firſt ſketch of this exquiſite piece, which Addiſon

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§ "Ed in vero nella Sifillide de l'autore ſe connoſcere quanto una mente della filoſofia rigenerata, ed incitata dal furor poetico prevaglia; e con quanto ſpirito muover poſſa, ed agitare le materie, che in ſe rivolge, e fuor di ſe in armonioſi verſi diffonde." GRAVINA. p. 124. lib. i.

called MERUM SAL, was written in leſs than a fortnight, in two cantos only: but it was ſo univerſally applauded, that, in the next year, our poet enriched it with the machinery of the ſylphs, and extended it to five cantos; when it was printed with a letter to Mrs. Fermour, far ſuperior to any of Voiture. The inſertion of the machinery of the ſylphs in proper places, without the leaſt appearance of it's being aukwardly ſtitched in, is one of the happieſt efforts of judgment and art. He took the idea of theſe inviſible beings, ſo proper to be employed in a poem of this nature, from a little French book entitled, Le Comte de Gabalis, of which I have lately met with an account, in an entertaining writer. "The Abbé Villars, who came from Thoulouſe to Paris, to make his fortune by preaching, is the author of this diverting work. The five dialogues of which it conſiſts, are the reſult of thoſe gay converſations, in which the Abbé was engaged, with a ſmall circle of men, of fine wit and humour, like himſelf. When this book firſt appeared, it was univerſally read, as innocent and amuſing. But at length, its conſequences were perceived, and reckoned dangerous, at a time when this ſort of curioſities began to gain credit. Our devout preacher was denied the chair, and his book forbidden to be read. It was not clear whether the author intended to be ironical, or ſpoke all ſeriouſly. The ſecond volume which he promiſed, would have decided the queſtion: but the unfortunate Abbé was ſoon afterwards aſſaſſinated by ruffians, on the road to Lyons. The laughers gave out, that the gnomes and ſylphs, diſguiſed like ruffians, had ſhot him, as a puniſhment for revealing the ſecrets of the Cabala; a crime not to be pardoned by theſe jealous ſpirits, as Villars himſelf has declared in his book *."

It may not be improper to give a ſpecimen of this author's manner, who has lately been well imitated in the way of mixing jeſt with earneſt, in an elegant piece called HER-

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* Mêlanges d'Hiſtoire & de Litterature. By Dom. Noel Dargonne, diſguiſed under the name of Vigneul Marville. Tom. prem. pag. 275. edit. Rotterdam, 1700.

MIPPUS REDIVIVUS. The Comte de Gabalis being about to initiate his pupil into the moſt profound myſteries of the Roſicruſian philoſophy, adviſes him to conſider ſeriouſly, whether or no he had courage and reſolution ſufficient to RENOUNCE all thoſe obſtacles, which might prevent his ariſing to that height, which the figure of his nativity promiſed. "Le mot de RENONCER, ſays the ſcholar, m'effraya, & je ne doutai point qu'il n'allât me propoſer de renoncer au baptême ou au paradis. Ainſi ne ſçachant comme me tirer de ce mauvais pas; Renoncer, lui dis-je, Monſieur quoi-faut, il renoncer à quelque choſe? Vraiment, reprit-il, il le faut bien; & il le faut ſi neceſſairement, qu'il faut commencer par-là. Je ne ſçai ſi vous pourrez vous réſoudre: mais je ſçai bien que la ſageſſe n'habite point dans un corps ſujet au péché, comme elle n'entre point dans une ame prevenue d'erreur ou de malice. Les ſages ne vous admettront jamais à leur compagnie, ſi vous ne renoncez dès à préſent à un choſe qui ne peut compatir avec la ſageſſe. *Il faut*, ajoûta-t-il tout bas en ſe baiſſant à mon oreille, *il faut renoncer à tout commerce charnel avec les femmes* [*]." On a diligent peruſal of this book, I cannot find that POPE has borrowed any particular circumſtances relating to theſe ſpirits, but merely the general idea of their exiſtence.

THESE machines are vaſtly ſuperior to the allegorical perſonages of Boileau and Garth; not only on account of their novelty, but for the exquiſite poetry, and oblique ſatire, which they have given the poet an opportunity to diſplay. The buſineſs and petty concerns of a fine lady, receive an air of importance from the notion of their being perpetually overlooked and conducted, by the interpoſition of celeſtial agents.

IT is judicious to open the poem, by introducing the Guardian Sylph, warning Belinda againſt ſome ſecret impending danger. The account which Ariel [†] gives of the nature, office, and employment of theſe inhabitants of air, is finely fancied: into which ſeveral ſtrokes of ſatire are thrown with great delicacy and addreſs.

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[*] LE COMTE DE GABALIS, ou ENTRETIENS ſur les Sciences Secretes. Second ENTRETIEN, pag. 30. à Amſterdam, 1671.

[†] Cant. i. ver. 27, to ver. 119.

> Think what an equipage thou haſt in air,
> And view with ſcorn two pages and a chair.

The transformation of women of different tempers into different kinds of ſpirits, cannot be too much applauded.

> * The ſprites of fiery Termagants, in flame
> Mount up, and take a ſalamander's name.

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* Theſe images have been lately expreſſed in latin, with much purity and elegance; and deſerve to be here inſerted.

> Mortua laſcivum reſoluta liqueſcit in ignem,
> Aut abit in molles ſingula nympha notos:
> Ætherioſque trahens hauſtus, tenuiſſima turba,
> Verſat ad aeſtivum lucida membra jubar.
> Gaudet adhuc circum molles operoſa puellas
> Verſari, et veneres ſuppeditare novas.
> Curat uti dulces commendent oſcula riſus,
> Purior ut ſenſim prodeat ore rubor:
> Ne quatiat comptos animoſior aura capillos,
> Nec faedet pulcras puſtula ſaeva genas:
> Neve recens maculâ violetur purpura palli,
> Excidat aut niveo pendula gemma ſinu.
> Corpora nympharum vacuas tenuentur in auras;
> At ſtudia in memori pectore priſca manent.

Carm. Quadrageſ. vol. ii. pag. 32. Oxon. 1748.

Soft yielding minds to water glide away,
And ſip with Nymphs, their elemental tea.
The graver Prude ſinks downward to a gnome,
In ſearch of miſchief ſtill on earth to roam.
The light Coquettes in ſylphs aloft repair,
And ſport and flutter in the fields of air.

The deſcription of the * toilette, which ſucceeds, is judiciouſly given in ſuch magnificent terms, as dignify the offices performed at it. Belinda dreſſing is painted in as pompous a manner, as Achilles arming. The canto ends with a circumſtance, artfully contrived to keep this beautiful machinery in the reader's eye: for after the poet has ſaid, that the fair heroine

Repairs her ſmiles, awakens ev'ry grace,
And calls forth all the wonders of her face †,

He immediately ſubjoins,

The buſy ſylphs ſurround their darling care,
Theſe ſet the head, and thoſe divide the hair:
Some fold the ſleeve, whilſt others plait the gown,
And Betty's prais'd for labours not her own.

The mention of the Lock ‡, on which the poem turns, is rightly reſerved to the

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* Cant. i. ver. 121. † Ver. 741. ‡ Cant. ii. ver. 21.

ſecond canto. The ſacrifice of the baron to implore ſucceſs to his undertaking, is another inſtance of our poet's judgment, in heightening the ſubject †. The ſucceeding ſcene of ſailing upon the Thames is moſt gay and delightful; and impreſſes the moſt pleaſing pictures upon the imagination. Here too the machinery is again introduced with much propriety. Ariel ſummons his denizens of air; who are thus painted with a rich exuberance of fancy.

> Some to the ſun their inſect wings unfold,
> Waft on the breeze, or ſink in clouds of gold:
> Tranſparent forms, too thin for mortal ſight,
> Their fluid bodies half diſſolv'd in light.
> Looſe to the wind their airy garments flew,
> Thin glitt'ring textures of the filmy dew,
> Dipt in the richeſt tincture of the ſkies,
> Where light diſports in ever-mingling dyes;
> While every beam new tranſient colours flings,
> Colours, that change whene'er they wave their wings ‡.

Ariel afterwards enumerates the functions and employments of the ſylphs, in the following manner: where ſome are ſuppoſed to delight in more groſs, and others in more refined occupations.

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† Ver. 57. ‡ Ver. 59.

> Ye know the ſpheres and various taſks, aſſign'd
> By laws eternal to th' aerial kind.
> Some in the fields of pureſt æther play,
> And baſk and brighten in the blaze of day;
> Some guide the courſe of wandring orbs on high,
> Or roll the planets through the boundleſs ſky;
> Some, leſs refin'd, beneath the moon's pale light,
> Perſue the ſtars, that ſhoot acroſs the night;
> Or ſuck the miſts in groſſer air below;
> Or dip their pinions in the painted bow:
> Or brew fierce tempeſts on the wintry main,
> Or o'er the glebe diſtil the kindly rain *.

Thoſe who are fond of tracing images and ſentiments to their ſource, may perhaps be inclined to think, that the hint of aſcribing taſks and offices to ſuch imaginary beings, is taken from the Fairies and the Ariel of Shakeſpeare; let the impartial critic determine, which has the ſuperiority of fancy. The employment of Ariel in the TEMPEST, is ſaid to be,

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* Cant. ii. ver. 75.

— — — To tread the ooze
Of the ſalt deep;
To run upon the ſharp wind of the north;
To do — buſineſs in the veins of th' earth,
When it is bak'd with froſt;
— — To dive into the fire; to ride
On the curl'd clouds.

And again,

— — In the deep nook, where once
Thou call'd'ſt me up at midnight, to fetch dew
From the ſtill-vext Bermoothes. — — —

Nor muſt I omit that exquiſite ſong, in which his favourite and peculiar paſtime is expreſſed.

Where the bee ſucks, there ſuck I,
In a cowſlip's bell I lie;
There I couch when owls do cry.
On the bat's back I do fly,
After ſun-ſet, merrily;
Merrily, merrily, ſhall I live now,
Under the bloſſom that hangs on the bough.

With what wildneſs of imagination, but yet, with what propriety, are the amuſements of the fairies pointed out, in the MIDSUMMER

NIGHT'S DREAM: amuſements proper for none but fairies!

> — — 'Fore the third part of a minute, hence:
> Some to kill cankers in the muſk-roſe buds:
> Some war with rear-mice for their leathern wings,
> To make my ſmall elves coats; and ſome keep back
> The clamorous owl, that nightly hoots, and wonders
> At our queint ſpirits. — — — — —

Shakeſpeare only could have thought of the following gratifications for Titania's lover; and they are fit only to be offered, to her lover, by a fairy-queen.

> Be kind, and courteous to this gentleman,
> Hop in his walks, and gambol in his eyes;
> Feed him with apricocks and dewberries,
> With purple grapes, green figs, and mulberries.
> The honey-bags ſteal from the humble bees,
> And for night-tapers crop their waxen thighs,
> And light them at the fiery glow-worm's eyes,
> To have my love to bed, and to ariſe:
> And pluck the wings from painted butterflies,
> To fan the moon-beams from his ſleeping eyes.

If it ſhould be thought, that Shakeſpeare has the merit of being the firſt who aſſigned proper

per employments to imaginary perſons, in the foregoing lines, yet it muſt be granted, that by the addition of the moſt delicate ſatire to the moſt lively fancy, POPE, in the following paſſage, has excelled any thing in Shakeſpeare, or perhaps in any other author.

Our humbler province is to tend the fair,
Not a leſs pleaſing, though leſs glorious care;
To ſave the powder from too rough a gale,
Nor let th' impriſon'd eſſences exhale;
To draw freſh colours from the vernal flow'rs,
To ſteal from rainbows, ere they drop in ſhow'rs,
A brighter waſh; to curl their waving hairs,
Aſſiſt their bluſhes, and inſpire their airs;
Nay oft, in dreams invention we beſtow,
To change a flounce or add a furbelow *.

THE ſeeming importance given to every part of female dreſs, each of which is committed to the care and protection of a different ſylph, with all the ſolemnity of a general appointing the ſeveral poſts in his army, renders the following paſſage admirable, on account of its politeneſs, poignancy, and poetry.

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* Cant. ii. ver. 91.

Haſte then ye ſpirits, to your charge repair;
The fluttering fan be Zephyretta's care;
The drops to thee, Brillante, we conſign;
And, Momentilla, let the watch be thine;
Do thou, Criſpiſſa, tend the fav'rite lock;
Ariel himſelf ſhall be the guard of Shock [*].

The celebrated raillery of Addiſon on the hoop-petticoat, has nothing equal to the following circumſtance; which marks the difficulty of guarding a part of dreſs of ſuch high conſequence.

To fifty choſen ſylphs, of ſpecial note,
We truſt th' important charge the PETTICOAT:
Oft have we known that ſevenfold fence to fail,
Tho' ſtiff with hoops, and arm'd with ribs of mail;
Form a ſtrong line about the ſilver bound,
And guard the wide circumference around [†].

RIDET HOC, INQUAM, VENUS IPSA; RIDENT
SIMPLICES NYMPHÆ, FERUS ET CUPIDO.

OUR poet ſtill riſes in the delicacy of his ſatire, where he employs, with the utmoſt judgment and elegance, all the implements and furniture of the toilette, as inſtruments of puniſhment to thoſe ſpirits, who ſhall be careleſs of their charge: of puniſhment ſuch as ſylphs alone could undergo. Each of the delinquents,

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[*] Cant. ii. ver. 111.

[†] Cant. ii. ver. 117.

Shall feel ſharp vengeance ſoon o'ertake his ſins,
Be ſtop'd in vials, or transfix'd with pins;
Or plung'd in lakes of bitter waſhes lie;
Or wedg'd whole ages in a bodkin's eye;
Gums and pomatums ſhall his flight reſtrain,
While clog'd he beats his ſilken wings in vain;
Or allum-ſtyptics with contracting pow'r,
Shrink his thin eſſence like a ſhrivel'd flow'r;
Or, as Ixion fix'd, the wretch ſhall feel
The giddy motion of the whirling mill;
In fumes of burning chocolate ſhall glow,
And tremble at the ſea that froths below *.

If Virgil has merited ſuch perpetual commendation for exalting his bees, by the majeſty and magnificence of his diction, does not Pope deſerve equal praiſes, for the pomp and luſtre of his language, on ſo trivial a ſubject?

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* Cant. ii. ver. 136.

The ſame maſtery of language, appears in the lively and elegant deſcription of the game at Ombre; which is certainly imitated from the Sacchia of Vida, and as certainly equal to it, if not ſuperior. Both of them have elevated and enlivened their ſubjects, by ſuch ſimilies as the epic poets uſe; but as Cheſs is a play of a far higher order than Ombre, POPE had a more difficult taſk than Vida, to raiſe this his inferior ſubject, into equal dignity and gracefulneſs. Here again our poet artfully introduces his machinery;

Soon as ſhe ſpreads her hand, th' aerial guard
Deſcend, and ſit on each important card;
Firſt Ariel perch'd upon a mattadore *.

The majeſty with which the kings of ſpades and clubs, and the knaves of diamonds and clubs are ſpoken of, is very amuſing to the imagination; and the whole game is conducted with great art and judgment. I queſtion whether Hoyle could have played it better than Belinda. It is finely contrived that

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* Cant. iii. ver. 33.

ſhe ſhould be victorious; as it occaſions a change of fortune in the dreadful loſs ſhe was ſpeedily to undergo, and gives occaſion to the poet to introduce a moral reflection from Virgil, which adds to the pleaſantry of the ſtory. In one of the paſſages where POPE has copied Vida, he has loſt the propriety of the original, which ariſes from the different colours of the *men*, at cheſs.

> Thus, when diſpers'd a routed army runs, &c.[*]
>
> Non aliter, campis legio ſe buxea utrinque
> Compoſuit, duplici digeſtis ordine turmis,
> Adverſiſque ambæ fulſere coloribus alæ;
> Quam Gallorum acies, Alpino frigore lactea
> Corpora, ſi tendant albis in prælia ſignis,
> Auroræ populos contra, et Phaethonte peruſtos
> Inſano Æthiopas, et nigri Memnonis alas[†].

To this ſcene ſucceeds the tea-table. It is, doubtleſs, as hard to make a coffee-pot ſhine in poetry as a plough: yet POPE has ſucceeded in giving elegance to ſo familiar an object, as well as Virgil. The guardian ſpirits are again active, and importantly employed;

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[*] Cant. iii. ver. 81.

[†] Vidæ Scacchia Ludus, ver. 74, &c.

Strait hover round the fair her airy band[*];
Some, as ſhe ſipp'd, the fuming liquor fann'd.

Then follows an inſtance of aſſiduity fancied with great delicacy;

Some o'er her lap their careful plumes diſplay'd,
Trembling, and conſcious of the rich brocade.

But nothing can excel the behaviour of the ſylphs, and their wakeful ſollicitude for their charge, when the danger grows more imminent, and the cataſtrophe approaches.

Swift to the Lock a thouſand ſprites repair[†].

The methods by which they endeavoured to preſerve her from the intended miſchief, are ſuch only as could be executed by a ſylph; and have therefore an admirable propriety, as well as the utmoſt elegance.

A thouſand wings by turns blow back the hair[‡].
And thrice they TWITCH'D the diamond in her ear,
Thrice ſhe look'd back, and thrice the foe drew near.

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[*] Cant. iii. ver. 113.

[†] It is remarkable that madame de Sevigné has mentioned the ſylphs as inviſible attendants on the ladies, more than once in her Letters.

[‡] Cant. iii. ver. 136.

Still farther to heighten the piece, and to preſerve the characters of his machines to the laſt, juſt when the fatal * forfex was ſpread,

> Ev'n then, before the fatal engine clos'd †,
> A wretched ſylph too fondly interpos'd;——
> Fate urg'd the ſheers, and cut the ſylph in twain,
> (But airy ſubſtance ſoon unites again.)——

Which laſt line is an admirable parody on that paſſage of Milton, which, perhaps oddly enough, deſcribes Satan wounded:

> The griding ſword, with diſcontinuous wound,
> Paſs'd thro' him; but th' ethereal ſubſtance clos'd,
> Not long diviſible ‡. — — — —

The parodies are ſome of the moſt exquiſite parts of this poem. That which follows from the "Dum juga montis aper," of Virgil, contains ſome of the moſt artful ſtrokes of ſatire, and the moſt poignant ridicule imaginable.

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* Obſerve the many periphraſes, and uncommon appellations, Pope has uſed for *Sciſſars*, which would ſound too vulgar,—" Fatal Engine,—" Forfex,—" Sheers,—" Meeting Points, &c."

† Cant. iii. ver. 153.

‡ Paradiſe Loſt, Book vi. ver. 330.

While fiſh in ſtreams, or birds delight in air,
Or in a coach and ſix the Britiſh fair,
As long as Atalantis ſhall be read,
Or the ſmall pillow grace a lady's bed,
While viſits ſhall be paid on ſolemn days,
When numerous wax-lights in bright order blaze,
While nymphs take treats, or aſſignations give,
So long my honour, name, and praiſe, ſhall live[*].

THE introduction of frequent parodies on ſerious and ſolemn paſſages of Homer and Virgil, give much life and ſpirit to heroi-comic poetry. "Tu dors, Prelat? tu dors?" in Boileau, is the "Ευδεις Ατρεος υιε" of Homer, and is full of humour. The wife of the barber talks in the language of Dido in her expoſtulations to her Æneas, at the beginning of the ſecond canto of the Lutrin. POPE's parodies of the ſpeech of Sarpedon in Homer[†], and of the deſcription of Achilles's ſcepter[‡], together with the ſcales of Jupiter from Homer, Virgil, and Milton[§], are judiciouſly introduced in their ſeveral places; are perhaps ſuperiour to thoſe Boileau or Garth have uſed, and are worked up with peculiar pleaſantry. The mind of the reader is engaged by novelty, when it ſo unexpectedly finds a thought or object it had been accuſtomed to ſurvey in another form, ſuddenly arrayed in a ridiculous garb. A mixture of comic and ridiculous images, with ſerious and important ones, is alſo no ſmall beauty to this ſpecies of poetry. As in the following paſſages, where real and imaginary diſtreſſes are coupled together.

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[*] Cant. iii. ver. 165.

[†] Cant. v. ver. 9.

[‡] Cant. iv. ver. 133.

[§] Cant. v. ver. 72.

Not youthful kings in battle ſeiz'd alive [*];
Not ſcornful virgins who their charms ſurvive,
Not ardent lovers robb'd of all their bliſs,
Not ancient ladies when refus'd a kiſs,
Not tyrants fierce that unrepenting die,

Nay, to carry the climax ſtill higher,

Not Cynthia when her manteau's pinn'd awry,
E'er felt ſuch rage, reſentment, and deſpair.

This is much ſuperiour to a ſimilar paſſage in the Diſpenſary, which Pope might have in his eye;

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[*] Cant. iv. ver. 3.

As this the victors own ſuch ecſtacies [*]
As Memphian prieſts if their Oſiris ſneeze ;
Or champions with Olympic clangor fir'd,
Or ſimp'ring prudes with ſpritely Nantz inſpir'd,
Or Sultans rais'd from dungeons to a crown,
Or faſting zealots when the ſermon's done.

Theſe objects have no reference to Garth's ſubject, as almoſt all of POPE's have, in the paſſage in queſtion, where ſome female foible is glanced at. In this ſame canto, the cave of SPLEEN, the pictures of her attendants, ILL-NATURE and AFFECTATION, the effects of the vapour that hung over her palace, the imaginary diſeaſes ſhe occaſions, the [†] ſpeech of Umbriel, a gnome, to this malignant deity, the vial of female ſorrows, the ſpeech of Thaleſtris to aggravate the misfortune, the breaking the vial with its direful effects, and the ſpeech of the diſconſolate Belinda; all theſe circumſtances are poetically imagined, and are far ſuperiour to any of Boileau and Garth. How much in character is it for Belinda to mark a very diſmal and ſolitary ſituation, by wiſhing to be conveyed,

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[*] Cant. v. ad calc.

[†] Eſpecially when he adjures the goddeſs by an account of his ſervices, Cant. iv. ver. 72.

If e'er with airy horns I planted heads,
Or rumpled petticoats, or tumbled beds,
Or caus'd ſuſpicion where no ſoul was rude,
Or diſcompos'd the head-dreſs of a prude,
Or e'er to coſtive lap-dog gave diſeaſe——
Hear me, and touch Belinda with chagrin,
That ſingle act gives half the world the ſpleen.

Nothing can equal this beautiful panegyric, but the ſatirical touches that go before.

> Where the gilt chariot never marks the way,
> Where none learn Ombre, none e'er taſte Bohea * !

Nothing is more common in the poets than to introduce omens as preceding ſome important and dreadful event. Virgil has nobly deſcribed thoſe that preceded the death of Dido. The rape of Belinda's LOCK muſt neceſſarily alſo be attended with alarming prodigies. With what exquiſite ſatire are they enumerated!

> Thrice from my trembling hand the patch-box fell;
> The tottering china ſhook without a wind †.

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* Cant. iv. ver. 156.

† Ibid. ver. 161.

And

And ſtill more to aggravate the direfulneſs of the impending evil,

> Nay Poll ſate mute, and Shock was moſt unkind!

The chief ſubject of the fifth and laſt canto, is the battle that enſues, and the endeavours of the ladies to recover the hair. This battle is deſcribed, as it ought to be, in very lofty and pompous terms; a game of romps was never ſo well dignified before. The weapons made uſe of are the moſt proper imaginable: the lightning of the ladies eyes, intolerable frowns, a pinch of ſnuff, and a bodkin. The machinery is not forgot;

> Triumphant Umbriel on a ſconce's height,
> Clapp'd his glad wings, and ſate to view the fight*.

Again, when the ſnuff is given to the baron,

> The gnomes direct, to ev'ry atom juſt,
> The pungent grains of titillating duſt †.

Boileau and Garth have alſo each of them enlivened their pieces with a mock-fight,

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* Cant. v. ver. 53. † Ibid. ver. 85.

But Boileau has laid the ſcene of his action in a bookſeller's ſhop; where the combatants happen to encounter each other by chance. This conduct is a little inartificial; but has given the ſatyriſt an opportunity of indulging his ruling paſſion, the expoſing the bad poets, with which France at that time abounded. Swift's Battle of the Books, at the end of the Tale of a Tub, is evidently taken from this * battle of Boileau, which is excellent in its kind. The fight of the phyſicians, in the Diſpenſary, is one of its moſt ſhining parts. There is a vaſt deal of propriety, as well as pleaſantry, in the weapons Garth has given to his warriours. They are armed, much in character, with cauſtics, emetics, and cathartics; with buckthorn, and ſteel-pills; with ſyringes, bed-pans, and urinals. The execution is exactly proportioned to the deadlineſs of ſuch irreſiſtible weapons; and the wounds inflicted, are ſuitable to the nature of each different inſtrument, ſaid to inflict them †.

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* Cant. v.

† Ibid.

We are now arrived at the grand cataſtrophe of the poem; the invaluable Lock which is ſo eagerly ſought, is irrecoverably loſt! And here our poet has made a judicious uſe of that celebrated fiction of Arioſto; that all things loſt on earth are treaſured in the moon. How ſuch a fiction can have place in an epic poem, it becomes the defenders of this extravagant and lawleſs rhapſodiſt to juſtify; but in a comic one, it appears with grace and conſiſtency. The whole paſſage in Arioſto is full of wit and ſatire; for wit and ſatire were the chief and characteriſtical excellencies of Arioſto *. In this repoſitory

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* If this be thought too degrading a criticiſm on this juſtly celebrated Italian, I am ready to adopt the following opinion of a writer of taſte and penetration;

"Arioſto pleaſes; but not by his monſtrous and improbable fictions, by his bizarre mixture of the ſerious and comic ſtyles, by the want of coherence in his ſtories, or by the continual interruptions in his narration. He charms by the force and clearneſs of his expreſſion, by the readineſs and variety of his inventions, and by his natural pictures of the paſſions, eſpecially thoſe of the GAY and AMOROUS kind. And however his faults may diminiſh our ſatiſfaction, they are not able entirely to deſtroy it. Did our pleaſure really ariſe from theſe parts of his poem, which we denominate faults, this would be

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in the lunar ſphere, ſays the SPRIGHTLY Italian, were to be found,

Le lachrime, e i ſoſpiri de gli amanti,
L'inutil' tempo, che ſi perde a gioco,
E l'otio lungo d'huomini ignoranti,
Vani diſegni, che non han mai loco,
I vani deſiderii ſono tanti,
Che la piu parte ingombra di quel loco,
Cio che in ſumma qua giu perdeſti mai,
La ſu ſaltendo ritrovar potrai *.

It is very remarkable, that the poet had the boldneſs to place among theſe imaginary treaſures, the famous deed of gift of Conſtantine to Pope Silveſter, "If, ſays he, I "may be allowed to ſay this,"

Queſto era il dono (ſe pero dir lece)
Che Conſtantino al buon Silveſtre fece.

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no objection to criticiſm in general: it would only be an objection to thoſe particular rules of criticiſm, which would eſtabliſh ſuch circumſtances to be faults, and would repreſent them as univerſally blameable. If they are found to pleaſe, they cannot be faults; let the pleaſure which they produce, be ever ſo unexpected and unaccountable." Hume's Four DISSERTATIONS. Diſſ. iv. p. 212. London, 1757.

* Orlando Furioſo. Cant. xxxiv.

It may be obſerved in general, to the honour of the poets, both ancient and modern, that they have ever been ſome of the firſt, who have detected and oppoſed the falſe claims, and miſchievous uſurpations, of ſuperſtition and ſlavery. Nor can this be wondered at, ſince theſe two are the greateſt enemies, not only to all true happineſs, but to all true genius.

The denouement, as a pedantic diſciple of Boſſu would call it, of this poem, is well conducted. What is become of this important Lock of Hair? It is made a conſtellation with that of Berenice, ſo celebrated by Callimachus. As it riſes to heaven,

> The ſylphs behold it kindling as it flies *,
> And pleas'd purſue its progreſs through the ſkies.

One cannot ſufficiently applaud the art of the poet, in conſtantly keeping in the reader's view, the machinery of the poem, to the very laſt. Even when the Lock is

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* Cant. v. ver. 130.

transformed, the ſylphs, who had ſo carefully guarded it, are here once again artfully mentioned, as finally rejoicing in its honourable transformation.

In reading the Lutrin, I have always been ſtruck with the impropriety of ſo ſerious a concluſion, as Boileau has given to ſo ludicrous a poem. Piety and Justice are beings rather too awful, to have any concern in the celebrated Deſk. They appear as much out of place and ſeaſon, as would the archbiſhop of Paris in his pontifical robes, in an harlequin entertainment.

Pope does not deſert his favorite Lock, even after it becomes a conſtellation; and the uſes he aſſigns to it are indeed admirable, and have a reference to the ſubject of the poem,

> This the beau monde ſhall from the Mall ſurvey *,
> And hail with muſic it's propitious ray;

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* Cant. v. ver. 133.

This the bleſt lover ſhall for *Venus* take,
And ſend up prayers from Roſamonda's lake;
This Partridge ſoon ſhall view in cloudleſs ſkies,
When next he looks through Galileo's eyes;
And hence th' egregious wizard ſhall foredoom,
The fate of Louis, and the fall of Rome.

This is at once, DULCE LOQUI, and RIDERE DECORUM.

UPON the whole, I hope it will not be thought an exaggerated panegyric to ſay, that the RAPE OF THE LOCK, is the BEST SATIRE extant; that it contains the trueſt and livelieſt picture of modern life; and that the ſubject is of a more elegant nature, as well as more artfully conducted, than that of any other heroi-comic poem. POPE here appears in the light of a man of gallantry, and of a thorough knowledge of the world; and indeed he had nothing, in his carriage and deportment, of that affected ſingularity, which has induced ſome men of genius to deſpiſe, and depart from, the eſtabliſhed rules of politeneſs and civil life. For all poets have not practiſed the ſober and rational advice of Boileau.

> Que les vers ne ſoient pas votre eternel emploi;
> Cultivez vos amis, ſoyez homme de foi,
> C'eſt peu d'etre agréeable et charmant dans un livre;
> Il fait ſavoir encore, et converſer, et vivre *.

OUR nation can boaſt alſo, of having produced one or two more poems of the burleſque kind, that are excellent; particularly the SPLENDID SHILLING, that admirable copy of the ſolemn irony of Cervantes; who is the father and unrivalled model of the true mock-heroic: and the MUSCIPULA, written with the purity of Virgil, whom the author ſo perfectly underſtood, and with the pleaſantry of Lucian: to which I cannot forbear adding, the SCRIBLERIAD of Mr. Cambridge †, the MACHINÆ GESTICULAN-

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* L'Art Poetique, Chant. iv.

† This learned and ingenious writer hath made a new remark, in his preface, worth examination and attention. He ſays, that in firſt reading the *four* celebrated mock-heroic poems, he perceived they had all ſome radical defect. That at laſt he found by a diligent peruſal of Don Quixote, that

TES of Addiſon, the HOBBINOL of Somerville, and the TRIVIA of Gay.

IF ſome of the moſt candid among the French critics, begin to acknowledge, that they have produced nothing in point of SUBLIMITY and MAJESTY equal to the Paradiſe Loſt, we may alſo venture to affirm, that in point of DELICACY, ELEGANCE, and fine-turned RAILLERY, on which they have ſo much valued themſelves, they have produced nothing equal to the RAPE OF THE LOCK. It is in this compoſition, POPE principally appears a POET; in which he has diſplayed more imagination than in all his other works taken together. It ſhould how-

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Propriety was the fundamental excellence of that work. That all the *Marvellous* was reconcileable to *Probability*, as the author lead his hero into *that* ſpecies of abſurdity only, which it was *natural* for an imagination heated with the continual reading of books of chivalry to fall into. That the want of attention to this was the fundamental error of thoſe poems. For with what PROPRIETY do *Churchmen*, *Phyſicians*, *Beaux*, and *Belles*, or *Bookſellers*, in the Lutrin, Diſpenſary, Rape of the Lock, and Dunciad, addreſs themſelves to heathen Gods, offer ſacrifices, conſult oracles, or talk the language of Homer, and of the heroes of antiquity?

however be remembered, that he was not the FIRST former and creator of thoſe beautiful machines, the ſylphs; on which his claim to imagination is chiefly founded. He found them exiſting ready to his hand; but has, indeed, employed them with ſingular judgment and artifice.

SECT. V.

Of The ELEGY *to the Memory of an Unfortunate Lady, The* PROLOGUE *to Cato, and The* EPILOGUE *to Jane Shore.*

THE ELEGY *to the Memory of an Unfortunate Lady*, which is next to be ſpoken of, as it came from the heart, is very tender and pathetic; more ſo, I think, than any other copy of verſes of our author. We are unacquainted with the whole of her hiſtory, and with that ſeries of misfortunes, which ſeems to have drawn on the melancholy cataſtrophe, alluded to in the beginning of this ELEGY. She is ſaid to be the ſame perſon, to whom the duke of Buckingham has addreſſed ſome lines, viz. "To a Lady deſigning to retire into a Monaſtery." This deſign is alſo hinted at in POPE's Letters * where he ſays, in a letter addreſſed, I preſume, to this very perſon, "If you are reſolved, in revenge, to rob the world of ſo much example, as you may afford it, I believe your deſign will be vain: for even, in a monaſtery, your devotions cannot carry you ſo far towards the next world, as to make this loſe ſight of you: but you will be like a ſtar, that, while it is fixed in heaven, ſhines over all the earth. Whereſoever providence ſhall diſpoſe of the moſt valuable thing I know, I ſhall ever follow you with my ſincereſt wiſhes; and my beſt thoughts will be perpetually waiting upon you, when you never hear of me or them. Your own guardian angels cannot be more conſtant, nor more ſilent."

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* Vol. vii. p. 193. Octavo Edition.

THIS ELEGY opens with a ſtriking abruptneſs, and a ſtrong image; the poet fancies he beholds ſuddenly the phantom of his murdered friend;

> What beck'ning ghoſt along the moonlight ſhade,
> Invites my ſteps, and points to yonder glade?
> 'Tis ſhe!—but why that bleeding boſom gor'd,
> Why dimly gleams the viſionary ſword?

This queſtion alarms the reader; and puts one in mind of that lively and affecting image in the prophecy of Iſaiah, ſo vigorouſly conceived, that it places the object full in one's eyes. "Who is this that cometh from "Edom? With dyed garments from Boſ-"ra*?" Akenſide has begun one of his odes in the like manner;

> O fly! 'tis dire SUSPICION's mein;
> And meditating plagues unſeen,
> The ſorc'reſs hither bends!
> Behold her torch in gall imbru'd;
> Behold, her garments drop with blood
> Of lovers and of friends!

The execrations on the cruelties of this lady's relations, which had driven her to this deplorable extremity, are very ſpirited and forcible; eſpecially where the poet ſays emphatically,

> Thus, if eternal juſtice rules the ball,
> Thus ſhall your wives, and thus your children fall.

He deſcribes afterwards the deſolation of this family, by the following lively circumſtance and proſopopœia:

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[*] Chap. lxiii. ver. 1.

There paſſengers ſhall ſtand, and pointing ſay,
(While the long funerals blacken all the way)
Lo! theſe were they, whoſe ſouls the furies ſteel'd,
And curſt with hearts unknowing how to yield!
So periſh all, whoſe breaſt ne'er learn'd to glow
For others good, or melt at others woe.

The incident of her dying in a country remote from her relations and acquaintance, is touched with great tenderneſs, and introduced with propriety, to aggravate and heighten her lamentable fate;

No friend's complaint, no kind domeſtic tear *,
Pleas'd thy pale ghoſt, or grac'd thy mournful bier;
By foreign hands thy dying eyes were clos'd,
By foreign hands thy decent limbs compos'd,
By foreign hands thy humble grave adorn'd,
By ſtrangers honour'd, and by ſtrangers mourn'd!

The force of the repetition of the ſignificant epithet *foreign*, need not be pointed out to any reader of ſenſibility. The right of ſepulture of which ſhe was deprived, from the manner of her death, is glanced at with great delicacy; nay, and a very poetical uſe is made of it.

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* Something like that pathetic ſtroke in the Philoctetes of Sophocles, who, among other heavy circumſtances of diſtreſs, is ſaid not to have near him, any *συντροφον ομμα*. Ver. 171.— Not to be tranſlated.

> What though no ſacred earth allow thee room,
> Nor hallow'd dirge be mutter'd o'er thy tomb?
> Yet ſhall thy grave with riſing flowers be dreſt,
> And the green turf lie lightly on thy breaſt;
> There ſhall the morn her earlieſt tears beſtow,
> There the firſt roſes of the year ſhall blow.

IF this ELEGY be ſo excellent, it may be aſcribed to this cauſe; that the occaſion of it was real; for it is certainly an indiſputable maxim, "That nature is more powerful than fancy; that we can always feel more than we can imagine; and that the moſt artful fiction muſt give way to truth." When Polus the celebrated actor, once affected his audience with more than ordinary emotions, is was "luctû et lamentis veris," by burſting out into real cries and tears; for in perſonating Electra weeping over the ſuppoſed urn of her brother Oreſtes, he held in his hand the real aſhes of his own ſon lately dead*.

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* Aul. Gell. Noct. Attic. lib. vii. cap. v.

Events that have actually happened are, after all, the propereſt ſubjects for poetry. The beſt eclogue of Virgil *, the beſt ode of Horace †, are founded on real incidents. If we briefly caſt our eyes over the moſt intereſting and affecting ſtories, ancient or modern, we ſhall find that they are ſuch, as however adorned and a little diverſified, are yet grounded on true hiſtory, and on real matters of fact. Such, for inſtance, among the ancients, are the ſtories, of Joſeph, of Oedipus, the Trojan war and its conſequences, of Virginia and the Horatii; ſuch, among the moderns, are the ſtories of king Lear, the Cid, Romeo and Juliet, and Oroonoko. The ſeries of events contained in theſe ſtories, ſeem far to ſurpaſs the utmoſt powers of human imagination. In the beſt conducted fiction, ſome mark of improbability and incoherence will ſtill appear.

I SHALL only add to theſe, a tale literally true, which the admirable DANTE has intro-

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* The Firſt.

† Ode xiii. lib. ii.

duced in his Inferno, and which is not ſufficiently known; I cannot recollect any paſſage, in any writer whatever, ſo truly pathetic. Ugolino, a Florentine count, is giving the deſcription of his being impriſoned with his children by the archbiſhop Ruggieri. "The hour approached when we expected to have ſomething brought us to eat. But inſtead of ſeeing any food appear, * *I heard the doors of that horrible dungeon more cloſely barred.* I beheld my little children *in ſilence*, and could not weep. My heart was petrified! The little wretches wept, and my dear Anſelm ſaid; *Tu guardi sì, padre: che hai? father you look on us! what ails you?* I could neither weep nor anſwer, and continued ſwallowed up in ſilent agony, all that day, and the following night, even till the dawn of day. As ſoon as a glimmering ray darted ed through the doleful priſon, that I could view *again thoſe four faces, in which my own image was impreſſed, I gnawed both my hands,* with grief and rage. My children believing I did this through eagerneſs to eat, raiſing themſelves ſuddenly up, ſaid to me, *My father! our torments would be leſs, if you would allay the rage of your hunger upon us.* I reſtrained myſelf, that I might not encreaſe their miſery. *We were all mute that day, and the following.* Quel di, e l'altro, ſtemmo tutti muti. The fourth day being come [*], Gaddo falling extended at my feet, cried; *Padre mio, che non m' ajuti! My father, why do you not help me?* and died. The other three expired one after the other, between the fifth and ſixth day, famiſhed as thou ſeeſt me now! And I, *being ſeized with blindneſs,* began to go *groping upon them with my hands and feet:* and continued calling them by their *names three days* after they were

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* It was thought not improper to diſtinguiſh the more moving paſſages by Italics. Sir Joſhua Reynolds, whoſe mind is ſtored with great and exalted ideas, has lately ſhewn, by a picture on this ſubject, how qualified he is to preſide at a Royal Academy, and that he has talents that ought not to be confined to portrait-painting.

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[*] Mr. Richardſon gave a tranſlation in blank verſe of this paſſage of Dante in his book, entitled a Diſcourſe on the Dignity of the Science of a Connoiſſeur. London 1719. page 30.

dead.

dead. *E tre dì li chiamai poichè fur morti:* then *hunger vanquiſhed my grief!"*

If this inimitable deſcription had been found in Homer, the Greek tragedies, or Virgil, how many commentaries and panegyrics would it have given riſe to? What ſhall we ſay, or think, of the genius able to produce it? There are many of the ſame nature; and perhaps the Inferno of Dante is the next compoſition to the Iliad, in point of originality and ſublimity. And with regard to the Pathetic, let this tale ſtand a teſtimony of his abilities: for my own part, I truly believe it was never carried to a greater height. It is remarkable, that Chaucer appears to have been particularly ſtruck with this tale in Dante, having highly commended this, "grete poete of Italie," for this narration; with a ſummary of which he concludes the Monke's Tale*.

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* Milton was particularly fond of this writer. The following paſſage is curious, and has not been taken notice of by the late writers of his life: "Ego certè iſtis utriſque linguis non extremis tantummodò labris madidus; ſed ſiquis alius, quantum

THE PROLOGUE to *Addiſon's Tragedy of Cato*, is ſuperior to any prologue of Dryden; who, notwithſtanding, is ſo juſtly celebrated for this ſpecies of writing. The prologues of Dryden are ſatyrical and facetious; this of POPE is ſolemn and ſublime, as the ſubject required. Thoſe of Dryden contain general topics of criticiſm and wit, and may precede any play whatſoever, even tragedy or comedy. This of POPE is particular, and appropriated to the tragedy alone, which it was deſigned to introduce. The moſt ſtriking images and alluſions it contains, are taken, with judgment, from ſome paſſages in the life of Cato himſelf. Such is that fine ſtroke, more lofty than any thing in the tragedy

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quantum per annos licuit, poculis majoribus prolutus, poſſum tamen nonnunquam ad illum DANTEM, & Petrarcham, alioſque veſtros compluſculos, libenter & cupidè comeſſatum ire. Nec me tam ipſæ Athenæ Atticæ cum illò ſuo pellucido Iliſſo, nec illa vetus Roma ſuâ Tiberis ripâ retinere valuerunt, quin ſæpe Arnum veſtrum, & Fæſulanos illos Colles inviſere amem. Milton. EPISTOL. Epiſt. viii. B. Bommathæo Florentino. MICHAEL ANGELO, from a ſimiliarity of genius, was fond of Dante. Both were great maſters in the *Terrible*. M. Angelo made a *Bas-relief* on this ſubject.

itſelf, where the poet ſays, that when Cæſar amid the pomp and magnificence of a triumph,

Shew'd Rome her Cato's figure drawn in ſtate;
As her dead father's reverend image paſt,
The pomp was darken'd and the day o'ercaſt;
The triumph ceas'd.—Tears guſh'd from ev'ry eye.
The world's great victor paſs'd unheeded by;
Her laſt good man dejected Rome ador'd,
And honour'd Cæſar's leſs than Cato's ſword.

Such, again, is the happy alluſion to an old ſtory mentioned in Martial, of this ſage going into the theatre, and immediately coming out of it again:

Such plays alone ſhould win a Britiſh ear,
As Cato's ſelf had not diſdain'd to hear.

From which he draws an artful panegyric, on the purity and excellence of the play he was celebrating.

With reſpect to ſprightly turns and poignancy of wit, the prologues of Dryden have not been equalled. Many, and indeed the moſt excellent of them, were written on occaſion of the players going to Oxford; a cuſtom, for the neglect of which no good reaſon can be aſſigned; and which was introduced, by that polite ſcholar, and ſenſible governor, Dr. Ralph Bathurſt, Dean of Wells, and Preſident of Trinity College, while he was Vice-chancellor of that Univerſity*. At this time Dryden was ſo famous for his prologues, that no piece was reliſhed, nor would the theatres *ſcarcely* venture to produce it, if it wanted this faſhionable ornament. To this purpoſe, an anecdote is recorded of Southerne; who, on bringing his firſt play on the ſtage, did not fail to beſpeak a prologue of the artiſt in vogue. The uſual price had been four guineas. In the preſent caſe, Dryden inſiſted that he muſt have ſix for his work; "which, ſaid the mercantile bard, is out of no diſreſpect to you, young man; but the players have had my goods too cheap."

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* See the Life, &c. of Bathurst, lately publiſhed.

The tragedy of Cato itſelf, is a glaring inſtance of the force of party*; ſo ſententious and declamatory a drama would never have met with ſuch rapid and amazing ſucceſs, if every line and ſentiment had not been particularly tortured, and applied to recent events, and the reigning diſputes of the times. The purity and energy of the diction, and the loftineſs of the ſentiments, copied in a great meaſure from Lucan, Tacitus, and Seneca the philoſopher, merit approbation. But I have always thought, that thoſe pompous

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* When Addiſon ſpake of the ſecretary of ſtate at that time, he always called him, in the language of Shakeſpeare, "*That canker'd Bolingbroke.*" Notwithſtanding this, Addiſon aſſured Pope, he did not bring his tragedy on the ſtage with any party views; nay, deſired Pope to carry the poem to the Lords Oxford and Bolingbroke, for their peruſal. The play, however, was always conſidered as a warning to the people, that liberty was in danger during that tory miniſtry. To obviate the ſtrong impreſſions, that ſo popular a performance might make on the minds of the audience, Lord Bolingbroke, in the midſt of their violent applauſes, ſent for Booth, who played Cato, one night, into his box, between the acts, and preſented him with fifty guineas; in acknowledgement, as he expreſſed it with great addreſs, for defending the cauſe of liberty ſo well againſt a perpetual dictator.

Roman ſentiments are not ſo difficult to be produced, as is vulgarly imagined; and which, indeed, dazzle only the vulgar. A ſtroke of nature is, in my opinion, worth a hundred ſuch thoughts, as,

> When vice prevails, and impious men bear ſway,
> The poſt of honour is a private ſtation.

CATO is a fine dialogue on liberty, and the love of one's country; but conſidered as a dramatic performance, nay as a model of a juſt tragedy, as ſome have affectedly repreſented it, it muſt be owned to want, ACTION and PATHOS; the two hinges, I preſume, on which a juſt tragedy ought neceſſarily to turn, and without which it cannot ſubſiſt. It wants alſo CHARACTER, although that be not ſo eſſentially neceſſary to a tragedy as ACTION. Syphax, indeed, in his * interview with Juba, bears ſome marks of a rough African: the ſpeeches of the reſt may be transferred to any of the perſonages concerned. The ſimile drawn from mount Atlas, and the deſcription

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* Act ii. Scene v.

of the Numidian traveller ſmothered in the deſart, are indeed in character, but ſufficiently obvious. How Addiſon could fall into the falſe and unnatural cuſtom of ending his three firſt acts with ſimilies, is amazing in ſo chaſte and correct a writer. The loves of Juba and Marcia, of Portius and Lucia, are vicious and inſipid epiſodes, debaſe the dignity, and deſtroy the unity, of the fable.

One would imagine, from the practice of our modern play-wrights, that love was the only paſſion, capable of producing any great calamities in human life: for this paſſion has engroſſed, and been impertinently introduced into, all ſubjects*. In the Cinna of Corneille, which the prince of Condé called "the Breviary of kings," Maximus whines like a ſhepherd in the Paſtor Fido, even in the midſt of profound political reflections, that excel thoſe of Tacitus and Machiavel; and while the moſt important event, that could happen to the empire of the world, was debating. In his imitation of the Oreſtes of Sophocles, Crebillon has introduced a frigid love-intrigue. Achilles muſt be in love in the Iphigenia of Racine; and the rough Mithridates muſt be involved in this univerſal paſſion. A paſſion however it is, that will always ſhine upon the ſtage, where it is introduced as the chief ſubject, but not ſubordinate and ſecondary *. Thus, perhaps, there cannot be finer ſubjects for a drama, than Phædra, Romeo, Othello, and Monimia. The whole diſtreſs in theſe pieces

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* When the reſolution of Medea to kill her children, is almoſt diſarmed and deſtroyed by looking at them, and by their ſmiling upon her, ſhe breaks out;

> Φευ, φευ· τι προσδερκεσθε μ᾽ ομμασιν, τεκνα;
> Τι προσγελατε τον πανυστατον γελων;
> Αι, αι—τι δρασω;—καρδια γαρ οιχεται.
>
> Heu, heu! cur me oculis aſpicitis, liberi?
> Cur arridetis hoc extremo riſû?
> Heu, heu! quid faciam? cor enim mihi diſperit!
>
> Euripid. Medea. Ver. 1041.

No ſentiments of the Lover can be ſo tender, and ſo deeply touching, as theſe of the Mother.

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* L'Amour furieux, criminel, malheureux, ſuivi de remords, arrache de nobles larmes. Point de milieu : il faut, ou que l'amour domine en tiran, ou qu'il ne paroiſſe pas.
Oeuvres de Voltaire. Tom. xii. pag. 153.

I have juſt been told, that CHATEAUBRUN alſo very lately made poor Philoctetes in love, in his Deſert Iſland.

ariſes *ſingly* from this unfortunate paſſion, carried to an extreme*. The GREATER paſſions were the conſtant ſubjects of the Grecian; the TENDERER paſſions of the French and Engliſh theatres. Terror reigned in the former; pity occupies the latter. The moderns may yet boaſt of ſome pieces, that are not emaſculated with this epidemical effeminacy. Racine was at laſt convinced of its impropriety, and gave the public his Athaliah; in which were no parts, commonly called by the French d'amoreux & de l'amoreuſe, which parts were always given to their two capital actors. The Merope and Oreſtes of Voltaire, are likewiſe free from any ill-placed tenderneſs, and romantic gallantry. For which he has merited the praiſes of the learned father Tournemine, in a letter to his friend father Brumoy†.

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* The introduction of female actreſſes on the modern ſtage, together with that importance which the ladies in theſe latter ages have juſtly gained, in compariſon to what the ancients allowed them, are the two great reaſons, among others, of the prevalence of theſe tender tales. The ladies of Athens had not intereſt enough to damn a piece of Sophocles or Euripides.

† Les Oeuvres de Voltaire, tom. viii. 38.

But LEAR and MACBETH are alſo ſtriking inſtances what intereſting tragedies may be written, without having recourſe to a love-ſtory. It is pity that the tragedy of Cato, in which all the rules of the drama, as far as the mechaniſm of writing reaches, are obſerved, is not exact with reſpect to the unity of time. There was no occaſion to extend the time of the fable longer than the mere repreſentation takes up; all might have paſſed in the compaſs of three hours from the morning, with a deſcription of which the play opens; if the poet, in the fourth ſcene of the fifth act, had not talked of the *ſetting* ſun playing on the armour of the ſoldiers.

HAVING been imperceptibly led into this little criticiſm on the tragedy of Cato, I beg leave to ſpeak a few words on ſome other of Addiſon's pieces. The * firſt of his poems, addreſſed to Dryden, Sir John Somers, and king William, are languid, proſaic, and void of any poetical imagery or ſpirit. The Letter from Italy, is by no means equal to a ſubject fruitful of genuine poetry, and which might have warmed the moſt cold and correct imagination. One would have expected, a young traveller in the height of his genius and judgment, would have broke out into ſome ſtrokes of enthuſiaſm. With what flatneſs and unfeelingneſs has he ſpoken of ſtatuary and painting! Raphäel never received a more flegmatic eulogy. The ſlavery and ſuperſtition of the preſent Romans, are well touched upon towards the concluſion; but I will venture to name a little piece on a parallel ſubject, that excels this celebrated Letter; and in which is much lively and original imagery, ſtrong painting, and manly ſentiments of freedom. It is a copy of verſes written at Virgil's Tomb, and printed in Dodſley's * Miſcellanies.

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* Tickle has ridiculouſly marked the author's age to be but twenty-two and twenty-ſeven; as if theſe verſes were extraordinary efforts at that age! To theſe however Addiſon owed his introduction at court, and his acquaintance with that polite patron Lord Somers.

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* Vol. iv. pag. 114.

THAT there are many well-wrought deſcriptions, and even pathetic ſtrokes, in the Campaign, it would be ſtupidity and malignity to deny. But ſurely the regular march which the poet has obſerved from one town to another, as if he had been a commiſſary of the army, cannot well be excuſed. There is a paſſage in Boileau, ſo remarkably oppoſite to this fault of Addiſon, that one would almoſt be tempted to think he had the Campaign in his eye, when he wrote it, if the time would admit * it.

Loin ces rimeurs craintifs, dont l'eſprit phlegmatique
Garde dans ſes fureurs un ordre didactique;
Qui chantant d'un heros les progrés éclatans,
MAIGRES HISTORIENS, SUIVRONT L'ORDRE DES TEMPS;
Ils n'oſent un moment prendre un ſujet de vüe,
Pour prendre Dole, il faut que Lille ſoit rendüe;
Et que leur vers exact, ainſi que Mezerai,
Ait fait déja tomber—les remparts de † Coutrai.

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* But the Art of Poetry was written in the year 1672, many years before the Campaign. Addiſon might have profited by this rule of his acquaintance, for whom he had a great reſpect.

† L'Art poetique. Ch. ii.

The moſt ſpirited verſes Addiſon has written, are, an Imitation of the third ode of the third book of Horace, which is indeed performed with energy and vigour; and his compliment to Kneller, on the picture of king George the firſt. The occaſion of this laſt poem is peculiarly happy; for among the works of Phidias which he enumerates, he ſelects ſuch ſtatues as exactly mark, and characteriſe, the laſt ſix Britiſh kings and queens.

* Great Pan who wont to chaſe the fair,
And lov'd the ſpreading OAK, was there;
Old Saturn too, with upcaſt eyes,
Beheld his ABDICATED ſkies;
And mighty Mars for war renown'd,
In adamantine armor frown'd:
By him the childleſs goddeſs roſe,
Minerva, ſtudious to compoſe
Her twiſted threads; the web ſhe ſtrung,
And o'er a loom of marble hung;

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* CHARLES II. famous for his lewdneſs; the alluſion to his being concealed in the oak is artful. JAMES II. WILLIAM III. Queen MARY, who had no heirs, and was a great workwoman. Queen ANNE married to the PRINCE of Denmark, who loſt the D. of Glouceſter in his youth. GEORGE I. who conquered the Highland rebels at Preſton, 1715.

Thetis the troubled ocean's queen,
Match'd with a MORTAL, next was ſeen,
Reclining on a funeral urn,
Her ſhort-liv'd darling ſon to mourn.
The laſt was HE, whoſe thunder ſlew
The Titan race, a rebel crew,
That from a HUNDRED HILLS ally'd,
In impious league their king defy'd.

There is ſcarcely, I believe, any inſtance, where mythology has been applied with more delicacy and dexterity, and has been contrived to anſwer in its application, ſo minutely, exactly, in ſo many correſponding circumſtances.—

WHATEVER cenſures we have here, too boldly, perhaps, ventured to deliver on the *profeſſed* poetry of Addiſon, yet muſt we candidly own, that in various parts of his proſe-eſſays, are to be found many ſtrokes of genuine and ſublime poetry; many marks of a vigorous and exuberant imagination. Particularly, in the noble allegory of Pain and Pleaſure, the Viſion of Mirza, the ſtory of Maraton and Yaratilda, of Conſtantia and

Theodoſius, and the beautiful eaſtern tale of Abdallah and Balſora; and many others: together with ſeveral ſtrokes in the Eſſay on the pleaſures of imagination. It has been the lot of many great names, not to have been able to expreſs themſelves with beauty and propriety in the fetters of verſe, in their reſpective languages; who have yet manifeſted the force, fertility, and creative power of a moſt poetic genius, in proſe*. This was the caſe of Plato, of Lucian, of Fenelon, of Sir Philip Sidney, and Dr. T. Burnet, who in his Theory of the Earth, has diſplayed an imagination, very nearly equal to that of Milton.

> ————Mænia mundi
> Diſcedunt! totum video per Inane geri res!

After all, the chief and characteriſtical excellency of Addiſon, was his HUMOUR; for in humour no mortal has excelled him except Moliere. Witneſs the character of Sir Roger de Coverley, ſo original, ſo natural, and ſo inviolably preſerv'd; * particularly, in the month, which the Spectator ſpends at his hall in the country. Witneſs alſo the Drummer, that excellent and neglected comedy, that juſt picture of life and real manners, where the poet never ſpeaks in his own perſon, or totally drops or forgets a character, for the ſake of introducing a brilliant ſimile, or acute remark: where no train is laid for wit; no JEREMYS, or BENS, are ſuffer'd to appear.

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* In ſome of the eaſtern ſtories, lately publiſhed in the ADVENTURER, much invention is diſplayed; and this too by an author, that, I have never heard, has written any conſiderable verſes. See, particularly, the ſtory of Amurath, N°. 20, of Nouraddin and Amana, N°. 73, and of Carazan. N°. 132, by Mr. Hawkeſworth.

THE EPILOGUE *to Jane Shore*, is the laſt piece that belongs to this Section; the title of which by this time the reader may have poſſibly forgot. It is written with that air of gallantry and raillery, which, by a ſtrange perverſion of taſte, the audience expects in all epilogues to the moſt ſerious and pathetic pieces. To recommend cuckoldom and palliate adultery, is their uſual intent. I wonder Mrs. Oldfield was not ſuffered to ſpeak it; for it is ſuperior to that which was uſed on the occaſion. In this taſte Garrick has written ſome, that abound in ſpirit and drollery. Rowe's genius * was rather delicate and ſoft, than ſtrong and pathetic; his compoſitions ſooth us with a tranquil and tender ſort of complacency, rather than cleave the heart with pangs of commiſeration. His diſtreſſes are entirely founded on the paſſion of love. His diction is extremely elegant and chaſte, and his verſification highly melodious. His plays are declamations rather than dialogues, and his characters are general, and undiſtinguiſhed from each

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* Vol. II. during the month of July. See the characters of Will. Wimble, Moll White, and the juſtices of the quorum, p. 200. & ſeq. And Vol. v. Sir Roger at Weſtminſter Abby, 329. and particularly at the tragedy of the Diſtreſt Mother with the Spectator.

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* There are however ſome images in Rowe ſtrongly painted; ſuch, particularly as the following, which is worthy of Spenſer; ſpeaking of the *Tower*.

> Methinks SUSPICION and DISTRUST dwell here,
> *Staring* with *meagre* forms thro' *grated* windows.
> Lady Jane Grey, Act iii. Sc. ii.

each other. Such a furious character as that of Bajazet, is eaſily drawn; and, let me add, eaſily acted. There is a want of unity in the fable of Tamerlane. The death's head, dead body, and ſtage hung in mourning, in the Fair Penitent, are artificial and mechanical methods of affecting an audience. In a word, his plays are muſical and pleaſing poems; but inactive and unmoving tragedies. This of Jane Shore is, I think, the moſt intereſting and affecting of any he has given us: but probability is ſadly violated in it by the neglect of the unity of time. For a perſon to be ſuppoſed to be ſtarved, during the repreſentation of five acts, is a ſtriking inſtance of the abſurdity of this violation. In this piece, as in all of Rowe, are many florid ſpeeches utterly inconſiſtent with the ſtate and ſituation of the diſtreſsful perſonages who ſpeak them. When Shore firſt meets with her huſband, ſhe ſays,

> * Art thou not riſen by miracle from death?
> Thy ſhroud is fallen from off thee, and the grave

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* Act v. Sc. iv.

> Was bid to give thee up, that thou might'ſt come,
> The meſſenger of grace and goodneſs to me.—

He has then added ſome lines, intolerably flowery and unnatural;

> Give me your drops, ye ſoft deſcending rains,
> Give me your ſtreams, ye never-ceaſing ſprings,
> That my ſad eyes may ſtill ſupply my duty,
> And feed an everlaſting flood of ſorrow.

This is of a far diſtant ſtrain from thoſe tender and ſimple exclamations ſhe uſes, when her huſband offers her ſome rich conſerves;

> ———————— † How can you be ſo good?

And again,

> ————Have you forgot
> That coſtly ſtring of pearl you brought me home,
> And ty'd about my neck? *how could I leave you?*

She continues to gaze on him with earneſtneſs, and inſtead of eating as he entreats her, ſhe obſerves,

> ————You're ſtrangely alter'd—
> Say, gentle Belmour, is he not? how pale

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† Ibid.

> Your viſage is become? Your eyes are hollow,—
> Nay, you are wrinkled too—

To which ſhe inſtantly ſubjoins, ſtruck with the idea that ſhe herſelf was the unhappy cauſe of this alteration;

> ———Alas the day!
> My wretchedneſs has coſt you many a tear,
> And many a bitter pang ſince laſt we parted.

What ſhe anſwers to her huſband, when he aſks her movingly,

> Why doſt thou fix thy dying eyes upon me
> With ſuch an earneſt, ſuch a piteous look,
> As if thy heart was full of ſome ſad meaning,
> Thou couldſt not ſpeak!—

Is pathetic to a great degree;

> Forgive me! *but* forgive me!

Theſe few words far exceed the moſt pompous declamations of *Cato*. The interview betwixt Jane Shore and Alicia, in the middle of this act, is alſo very affecting: where the madneſs of Alicia is well painted. But of all repreſentations of madneſs, that of

Clementina, in the hiſtory of Sir Charles Grandiſon, is the moſt deeply intereſting. I know not whether even the madneſs of Lear is wrought up, and expreſſed by ſo many little ſtrokes of nature, and genuine paſſion. Shall I ſay it is pedantry to prefer and compare, the madneſs of Oreſtes in Euripides, to this of Clementina?

It is probable, that this is become the moſt popular and pleaſing tragedy of all Rowe's works, becauſe it is founded on our own hiſtory. I cannot forbear wiſhing, that our writers would more frequently ſearch for ſubjects, in the annals of England, which afford many ſtriking and pathetic events, proper for the ſtage. We have been too long attached to Grecian and Roman ſtories. In truth the DOMESTICA FACTA, are more intereſting, as well as more uſeful: more intereſting, becauſe we all think ourſelves concerned in the actions and fates of our countrymen; more uſeful, becauſe the characters and manners bid the faireſt to be true and natural, when they are drawn from models with which we are exactly acquainted. The Turks, the Perſians, and Americans, of our poets, are in reality diſtinguiſhed from Engliſhmen, only by their turbans and feathers; and think, and act, as if they were born and educated within the bills of mortality. The hiſtorical plays of * Shakeſpeare, are always particularly grateful to the ſpectator, who loves to ſee and hear our own Harrys and Edwards, better than all the Achilleſes or Cæſars, that ever exiſted. In the choice of a domeſtic ſtory, however, much judgment and circumſpection muſt be exerted, to ſelect one of a proper æra; neither of too ancient, or of too modern a date. The manners of times very ancient, we ſhall be apt to falſify.

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* Milton has left, in a manuſcript, thirty-three ſubjects for tragedies, all taken from the Engliſh annals; which manuſcript the curious reader may ſee printed in Newton's Edit. of Milton, Oct. Vol. iii. pag. 331. And in Birch's life of Milton, prefixed to his edition of Milton's proſe-works, pag. 51; and in Peck's Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Milton, pag. 90.

ſy, as thoſe of the Greeks and Romans. And recent events, with which we are thoroughly acquainted, are deprived of the power of impreſſing ſolemnity and awe, by their notoriety and familiarity. Age ſoftens and wears away all thoſe diſgracing and depreciating circumſtances, which attend modern tranſactions, merely becauſe they are modern. Lucan was much embarraſſed by the proximity of the times he treated of. On this very account, as well as others, the beſt tragedy that could be poſſibly written on the murder of Charles I. would be coldly received. Racine ventured to write on a recent hiſtory, in his Bajazet; but would not have attempted it, had he not thought, that the diſtance of his hero's country repaired, in ſome meaſure, the nearneſs of the time in which he lived. "Major a longinquo reverentia."

Pope, it is ſaid, had framed a deſign of writing an epic poem, on a fact recorded in our old annaliſts, and therefore more engaging to an Engliſhman; on the ARRIVAL of BRUTUS, the ſuppoſed grandſon of Æneas, in our iſland, and the ſettlement of the firſt foundations of the Britiſh monarchy. A full ſcope might have been given to a vigorous imagination, to embelliſh a fiction drawn from the boſom of the remoteſt antiquity. Some tale, equally venerable and ancient, it was alſo the purpoſe of Milton * to adorn; for

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* Whether he intended, as A POET expreſſes it, To,

Record old ARTHUR's magic tale,
And EDWARD fierce in ſable mail;
Sing royal BRUTUS' lawleſs doom,
And brave BONDUCA, ſcourge of Rome;
Great PENDRAGON's fair-branched line,
Stern ARVIRAGE, or old LOCRINE.
THE UNION, pag. 92.

" An hiſtorical poem, ſays Milton, in the above-mentioned manuſcript, may be found ſomewhere in Alfred's reign, eſpecially at his iſſuing out of Edelingſey, on the Danes, whoſe actions are well like thoſe of Ulyſſes." In Milton's hiſtory of England may be ſeen the ſtory of Brutus here in queſtion: with which he ſeems pleaſed, as it ſuited the romantic turn of his mind. See his MANSUS.

Siquando indigenas revocabo in carmina reges,
Arthurumque etiam, &c.

Ipſe

for he ſays, in his Reaſon of church government*, "I am meditating what king or knight BEFORE THE CONQUEST might be choſen, in whom to lay the pattern of a Chriſtian hero." But ſhall I be pardoned for ſuſpecting, that POPE would not have ſucceeded in his deſign; that ſo DIDACTIC a genius would have been deficient in that SUBLIME and PATHETIC, which are the main nerves of the epopea; that he would have given us many elegant deſcriptions, and many GENERAL characters, well drawn; but would have failed to ſet before our eyes the REALITY of theſe objects, and the ACTIONS of theſe characters: for Homer profeſſedly draws no characters, but gives us to collect them from the looks and behaviour of each perſon he introduces; that POPE's cloſe and conſtant reaſoning had im-

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Ipſe ego Dardanias Rutupina per æquora puppes,
Dicam, & Pandraſidos regnum vetus Inogeniæ,
Brennumque, Arviragumque, &c.

And, particularly, the EPITAPHIUM DAMONIS.

* Pag. 24.

paired and cruſhed the faculty of imagination; that the political reflections, in this piece, would, in all probability, have been more numerous than the affecting ſtrokes of nature; that it would have more reſembled the HENRIADE than the ILIAD, or even the GIERUSALEMME LIBERATA; that it would have appeared, (if this ſcheme had been executed) how much, and for what reaſons, the man that is ſkilful in painting modern life, and the moſt ſecret foibles and follies of his cotemporaries, is, THEREFORE diſqualified for repreſenting the ages of heroiſm, and that ſimple life, which alone epic poetry can gracefully deſcribe; in a word, that this compoſition would have ſhewn more of the PHILOSOPHER than of the POET. Add to all this, that it was to have been written in rhyme; a circumſtance, ſufficient of itſelf alone to overwhelm and extinguiſh all enthuſiaſm, and produce endleſs tautologies and circumlocutions. Are not theſe ſuppoſitions ſtrengthened by what Dr. Warburton * has informed us, namely, that POPE in this poem intended to have treated amply, "Of ALL that regarded civil regimen, or the ſcience of politics; that the ſeveral forms of a republic were here to be examined and explained; together with the ſeveral modes of religious worſhip, as far forth as they affect ſociety;" than which, ſurely there could not have been a more improper ſubject for an epic poem.

IT is not impertinent to obſerve, for the ſake of thoſe who are fond of the hiſtory of literature, and of the human mind in the progreſs of it, that the very firſt poem that appeared in France, any thing like an epic poem, was on this identical ſubject, of Brutus arriving in England. It was written by Maſter EUSTACHE, ſo early as in the reign of Louis the ſeventh, ſirnamed the Young, who aſcended the throne in the year 1137, and who was the huſband of the celebrated

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* Vol. III.

Eleonora, afterwards divorced, and married to our Henry the ſecond. The author called it, Le ROMAN de Brut. Every piece of poetry was at that time denominated a romance. The Latin language ceaſed to be regularly ſpoken in France, about the ninth century; and was ſucceeded by what was called the *Romance*-tongue, a mixture of the language of the Francs, and of bad Latin. The ſpecies of writing, called *Romans*, began in the tenth century, according to the opinion of the Benedictine fathers *, who have well refuted M. Fleuri and Calmet, who make it leſs ancient by two hundred years. The poem, or *Roman*, we are ſpeaking of, is full of wonderful and improbable tales, and ſupernatural adventures, ſuited to the taſte of ſo barbarous an age. It is matter of ſome curioſity, to ſee a ſpecimen of the ſtyle of this eldeſt of the French poets. This is his exordium:

> Qui veut ouïr, qui veut ſcavoir,
> De roi en roi, & d'hoir en hoir,

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* Hiſt. Lit. T. 6, 7.

Qui cils furent, & d'où cils vinrent,
Qui Angleterre primes tinrent.

We may judge, from this paſſage, of the ſtate of the language. Maſter Euſtache has been particularly careful to mark the time in which he lived and wrote, by his two concluding lines:

L'an mil cent cinquante—cinq ans
Fit Maiſtre Euſtache ces Romans.

I WILL take leave to add, that the ſecond poem, now remaining, in the French language, was entitled, The Romance of Alexander the Great. It was the confederated work of four authors, famous in their time. Lambert le Court, and Alexander of Paris, ſung the exploits of Alexander; Peter de Saint Cloſt, wrote his will in verſe; the writing the will of a hero being then a common topic; and John le Nivelois, added a book concerning the manner in which his death was revenged. It is remarkable, that before this time, all the *Romans* had been compoſed in verſes of eight ſyllables: but in this piece, the four authors firſt uſed verſes of TWELVE ſyllables, as more ſolemn and majeſtic. And this was the origin, though but little known, of thoſe verſes which we now call ALEXANDRINES; the French heroic meaſure: the name being derived from Alexander, the hero of the piece, or from Alexander, the moſt celebrated of the four poets concerned in this work. Theſe were the moſt applauded poets of that age. Fauchet highly commends this poem: particularly a paſſage where a Cavalier is ſtruck to the ground with a lance, who, ſays the old bard,

> Du long comme il etoit, meſura la campagne.

Which is not inferior to Virgil's,

> Heſperiam metire jacens.—

One would not imagine this line had been written ſo early as the middle of the twelfth century. A great and truly learned antiquary has remarked, for the honour of our country, that about this time, 1160, appeared the firſt traces of any theatre. "A monk called Geoffry, who was afterwards abbot of St. Alban's in England, employed in the education of youth, made his pupils repreſent, with proper ſcenes and dreſſes, tragedies of piety. The ſubject of the firſt dramatic piece, was the miracles of ſaint Catharine, which appeared long before any of our repreſentations of the MYSTERIES*."

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* The preſident Henault, Hiſtoire de France. Tom. I. p. 151. a Paris 1749.

SECT. VI.

Of the Epiſtle of SAPPHO *to* PHAON, *and of* ELOISA *to* ABELARD.

IT is no ſmall merit in Ovid, to have invented * this beautiful ſpecies of writing epiſtles under feigned characters. It is a high improvement on the Greek elegy; to which its dramatic nature renders it greatly ſuperior. It is indeed no other than a paſſionate ſoliloquy; in which the mind gives vent to the diſtreſſes and emotions under which it labours: but by being directed and addreſſed to a particular perſon, it gains a degree of propriety, that the beſt conducted ſoliloquy, in a tragedy, muſt ever want. Our impatience under any preſſures of grief, and diſorder of mind, makes ſuch paſſionate expoſtulations with the perſons ſuppoſed to cauſe ſuch uneaſineſſes, very natural. Judgment is chiefly ſhewn, by opening the intereſting complaint juſt at ſuch a period of time, as will give occaſion for the moſt tender ſentiments, and the moſt ſudden and violent turns of paſſion to be diſplayed. Ovid may, perhaps, be blamed for a ſameneſs of ſubjects, in theſe epiſtles of his heroines; whoſe diſtreſſes are almoſt all occaſioned by their lovers forſaking them. His epiſtles are likewiſe too long; which circumſtance has forced him into a repetition and languor in the ſentiments. It would be a pleaſing taſk, and conduce to the formation of a good taſte, to ſhew how differently Ovid and the Greek tragedians, have made Medea, Phædra, and Deianira ſpeak, on the very ſame occaſions. Such a compariſon would abundantly manifeſt, the FANCY and WIT of Ovid, and the JUDGMENT and NATURE of Euripides and Sophocles. If the character of Medea was not better ſupported in the tragedy, which Ovid is ſaid to have produced, and of which Quintilian ſpeaks ſo advantageouſly, than it is in her epiſtle to Jaſon, one may venture to declare, that the Romans would not yet have been vindicated, from their inferiority to the Greeks, in tragic poeſy.

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* Propertius, however, has one compoſition of this ſort, entitled, Epiſtola Arethuſæ ad Lycotam. Lib. iv. Eleg. 3.

The Epistle before us is tranſlated by Pope, with faithfulneſs and with elegance; and much excells any that Dryden tranſlated in the volume he publiſhed: many of which were done by ſome "of the mob of gentlemen that wrote with eaſe;" that is, Sir C. Scroop, Caryl, Pooly, Wright, Tate, Buckingham, Cooper, and other careleſs rhymers. A good tranſlation of theſe epiſtles, is as much wanted as one of Juvenal; for, out of ſixteen ſatires of that poet, Dryden himſelf tranſlated but ſix. We can now boaſt of happy tranſlations in verſe, of almoſt all the great poets of antiquity; whilſt the French have been poorly contented with only proſe tranſlations of Homer and Horace, which, ſays Cervantes, can no more reſemble the original, than the wrong ſide of tapeſtry can repreſent the right. The inability of the French tongue to expreſs many Greek or

Roman ideas with facility and grace, is here viſible; but the Italians have Horace tranſlated by Pallavacini, Theocritus by Ricolotti and Salvini, Ovid by Anguillara, the Æneid, admirably well, in blank verſe, by Annibal Caro, and the Georgics, in blank verſe alſo, by Daniello.

I RETURN to Ovid, by obſerving that he has put into the mouth of his heroine a greater number of pretty panegyrical epigrams, than of thoſe tender and paſſionate ſentiments, which ſuited her character, and made her SENSIBILITY in amours ſo famous. What can be more elegantly gallant than this compliment to Phaon?

> Sume fidem & pharetram; fies manifeſtus Apollo;
> Accedant capiti cornua; Bacchus eris.

This thought ſeems indiſputably to have been imitated, in that moſt juſtly celebrated of modern epigrams:

Lumine Acon dextro, capta eſt Leonilla ſiniſtro,
Et potis eſt forma vincere uterque Deos;
Blande puer, lumen quod habes, concede ſorori,
Sic tu cœcus AMOR, ſic erit illa VENUS.

My chief reaſon for quoting theſe delicate lines, was to point out the occaſion of them, which ſeems not to be ſufficiently known. They were made on Louis de Maguiron, the moſt beautiful man of his time, and the great favourite of Henry III. of France, who loſt an eye at the ſiege of Iſſoire; and on the Princeſs of Eboli, a great beauty, but who was deprived of the ſight of one of her eyes, and who was at the ſame time miſtreſs of Philip II. king of Spain.

IT was happily imagined to write an epiſtle in the character of Sappho, who had ſpoken of love with more warmth and feeling, than any writer of antiquity; and who deſcribed the violent ſymptoms attending this paſſion, in ſo ſtrong and lively a manner, that the phyſician Eraſiſtratus is ſaid to have diſcovered the ſecret malady of the prince Antiochus, who was in love with his mother-in-law Stratonice, merely by examining the ſymptoms of his patient's diſtemper by this deſcription. Addiſon has inſerted in two of his Spectators *, an elegant character of this poeteſs; and has given a tranſlation of two of her fragments, that are exquiſite in their kind: a tranſlation, which we may preſume Addiſon himſelf reviſed, and altered, for his friend Philips. As theſe two pieces are pretty well known, by being found in ſo popular a book as the Spectator, I ſhall ſay no more of them; but ſhall add two more of her fragments, which, though very ſhort, are yet highly beautiful and tender. The firſt repreſents the languor and liſtleſſneſs of a perſon deeply in love; we may ſuppoſe the fair author looking up earneſtly on her mother, caſting down the web on which ſhe was employed, and ſuddenly exclaiming:

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* No. 223—229.

Γλυκεια ματερ, ου τοι
Δυναμαι κρεκειν τον ιστον,
Ποθω δαμεισα παιδος.
Βραδιναν δι' Αφροδιταν *.

Dulcis mater! non
Poſſum texere telum
Amore victa pueri,
Per acrem Venerem.

The other fragment is of the deſcriptive kind; and ſeems to be the beginning of an Ode addreſſed to EVENING: it is quoted by Demetrius Phalereus †,

Εσπερε παντα φερεις.
Φερεις οινον, φερεις αιγα,
Φερεις ματερι παιδα.

Veſper omnia fers;
Fers vinum, fers capram,
Fers matri filiam.

From theſe little fragments, the firſt of which is an example of the *pathetic*, and the ſecond of the *pictureſque*, the *manner* of Sappho might have been gathered, if the two longer odes had not been preſerved in the treatiſes of Dionyſius, and of Longinus. I cannot help adopting the application Addiſon has made of his two lines of Phædrus, to theſe remains of our poeteſs; which is perhaps one of the moſt elegant, and happy applications that ever was made from any claſſic;

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* Inter novem illuſtr. fœmin. fragmenta. Edit. a Fulvio Urſino, Antwerp.

† Edit. Oxon. p. 104.

> O ſuavis anima! qualem te dicam bonam
> Antehac fuiſſe, tales cum ſint reliquiæ*!

The verſification of this tranſlation of Pope, is, in point of melody, next to that of his Paſtorals. Perhaps the two following lines, in which alliteration is ſucceſsfully uſed, are the moſt harmonious verſes in our language, I mean in rhyme:

> Ye gentle gales! beneath my body blow,
> And ſoftly lay me on the waves below!

The peculiar muſicalneſs of the firſt of theſe lines, in particular, ariſes principally from its conſiſting entirely of iambic feet; which have always a ſtriking, altho' unperceived, effect in an Engliſh verſe. As for example;

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* Phædr. Fab. L. iii. Fab. i. ver. 5, 6.

Yĕ gēntlĕ gāles bĕneāth mȳ bōdȳ blōw.

Even if the laſt foot alone be an iambic, it caſts a harmony over a whole line*:

Rapt into future times the bard bĕgūn.

There are many niceties in our verſification, which few attend to, and which would demand a regular treatiſe fully to diſcuſs: we ſhould ſurely uſe every poſſible art, to render our rough Northern language harmonious.

Fenton alſo has given us a tranſlation of this epiſtle to Phaon; but it is in no reſpect equal to Pope's: he has added another, of his own invention, of Phaon to Sappho, in which the ſtory of the transformation of the former, from an old mariner to a beautiful youth,

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[*] See Warton on Spenſer, Sect. xi. pag. 259, &c. Milton conſtantly ſtudied this beauty.

youth, is well told. Fenton * was an elegant ſcholar, and had an exquiſite taſte; the books he tranſlated for POPE in the Odyſſey, are ſuperior to Brome's. In his Miſcellanies are many pieces worthy notice; particularly, his Epiſtle to Southerne; the Fair Nun, imitated from Fontaine; Olivia a Character, an Ode to the Sun, and one to lord Gower, written in the true ſpirit of Lyric poetry, of which the following allegory is an example:

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* POPE highly valued him. In a letter to Gay, Vol. VIII. p. 169. he ſays, "I have juſt received the news of the death of a friend, whom I eſteemed almoſt as many years as you; poor Fenton. He died at Eaſt-Hamſtead, of indolence and inactivity; let it not be your fate, but uſe exerciſe." Craggs, who had never received a learned education, had ſome time before commiſſioned POPE to find out for him ſome polite ſcholar, whom he propoſed to take into his family, that he might acquire a taſte of literature, by the converſation and inſtruction of the perſon POPE ſhould recommend. He accordingly choſe Fenton; who, at that time, was an aſſiſtant in a ſchool at Seven Oaks in Kent; but Craggs died unluckily for the execution of this ſcheme. Mr. Craggs had the candor to make no objection to Fenton, though he was a nonjuror; being, I preſume, convinced he was honeſt as well as learned.

Enamour'd of the SEINE, celeſtial fair,
The blooming pride of Thetis azure train,
Bacchus, to win the nymph who caus'd his care,
Laſh'd his ſwift tigers to the Celtic plain;
There ſecret in her ſaphire cell,
He with the Nais wont to dwell,
Leaving the nectar'd feaſts of Jove;
And where her mazy waters flow,
He gave the mantling vine to grow,
A trophy to his love.

His tragedy of Mariamne* has undoubtedly merit, tho' the diction be too figurative and ornamental; it does indeed ſuperabound in the richeſt poetic images: except this may be palliated by urging, that it ſuits the characters of oriental heroes, to talk in ſo high a ſtrain, and to uſe ſuch a luxuriance of metaphors.

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* Pope thought highly of the ſtyle of Mariamne; and uſed to ſay it was one of the beſt written tragedies we had; and that the dialogue was particularly good. Our author himſelf attempted a tragedy on the ſtory of TIMOLEON, but not ſatiſfying himſelf, laid it aſide. Pope uſed to ſay, that Fenton's Epiſtle to Lambard was the moſt Horatian epiſtle in our language. I envy Fenton, ſaid he, that Epiſtle. His own admirable imitations had not yet appeared. Thoſe books of the Odyſſey, which Fenton tranſlated for our author, were the 1, 4, 19, 20. Thoſe which Broome tranſlated were the 2, 6, 8, 11, 12, 16, 18, 23. The remaining books our author himſelf tranſlated.

FROM this EPISTLE of Sappho, I may take occaſion to obſerve, that this ſpecies of writing, beautiful as it is, has not been much cultivated among us. Drayton, no deſpicable genius, attempted to revive it, and has left us ſome good ſubjects, tho' not very artfully handled *. We have alſo a few of this ſort of epiſtles by the late lord Hervey, in the fourth volume of Dodſley's Miſcellanies †, Flora to Pompey ‡, Ariſbe to Marius, and Monimia to Philocles, in which laſt are ſome pathetic ſtrokes, and Roxana to Uſbeck, taken from the incomparable § letters of the late preſident Monteſquieu; a fine

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* The beſt of his ENGLAND'S HEROICAL EPISTLES, are king John to Matilda, Elinor Cobham to Duke Humphry, William De Le Poole to Queen Margaret; Jane Shore to Edward IV. Lord Survey to Geraldine, and Lady Jane Grey to Lord Guilford Dudley. In his BARON'S WARS, there are many ſtrokes not unworthy of Spenſer; and his Nymphidia muſt be allowed to be a perfect pattern of paſtoral elegance.

† Page 90. & ſeq. ‡ Taken from Fontenelle.

§ Lettres Perſanes. A Genève. 1716.

* original work, in which the cuſtoms and manners of the Perſians are painted with the utmoſt truth and livelineſs, and which have been faintly imitated by the Jewiſh, Chineſe, and other letters. The beauty of this writer, is his expreſſive brevity; which lord Hervey has lengthened to a degree that is unnatural; eſpecially, as Roxana is ſuppoſed to write juſt after ſhe has ſwallowed a deadly poiſon, and during its violent operations. I have lately ſeen ſeveral pieces of this ſpecies, which, as the ſubjects are ſtriking, will, I hope, one day ſee the light. They are entitled, “ TASSO to LEONORA; written in an interval of his madneſs: LUCAN to NERO; juſt after he was condemned to death: Lady OLIVIA to CLEMENTINA,

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* Lady Wortley Montague, who reſided ſo long at Conſtantinople, ſaid, “ One would have thought the Baron de Monteſquieu had been born and bred a Turk, he has deſcibed that people, and the women particularly, ſo very accurately.”—“ I had rather have written the ſhort hiſtory of the Troglodites, conſiſting only of ten pages, then the admirable, the immortal hiſtory of Thuanus in ten great volumes.” MES PENSEES. ccxv.

on her refuſing to marry Grandiſon: CHARLES V. from the monaſtery he retired to, to the king of France: GALGACUS, general of the Britons, to AGRICOLA that commanded the Romans: MONTEZUMA to CORTEZ: VITIKINDA, the general of the Saxons, to CHARLEMAYNE: and ROSMUNDA to ALBOINUS, king of the Lombards."

THE Italians had a writer of heroic epiſtles called Antonio Bruni; theſe are ſome of his ſubjects; the HEBREW MOTHER to TITUS VESPASIAN, ERMINIA to TANCRED, CATHERINE of ARRAGON to HENRY VIII. TURNUS to LAVINIA, TANCRED to CLORINDA, ARMIDA to RINALDO, RADAMISTUS to ZENOBIA, NAUSICAA to ULYSSES, ANGELICA to ORLANDO, SOPHONISBA to MASINISSA, SEMIRAMIS to NINUS, HONORIA to ATTILA.

BUT of all ſtories, ancient or modern, there is not perhaps a more proper one to furniſh out an elegiac epiſtle, than that of

ELOISA and ABELARD. Their diſtreſſes were of a moſt SINGULAR and PECULIAR kind; and their names ſufficiently known, but not grown trite or common by too frequent uſage. POPE was a moſt excellent IMPROVER, if no great original INVENTOR; for, as we have ſeen what an elegant ſuperſtructure he has raiſed on the little dialogue of the Comte de Gabalis, ſo ſhall we perceive, in the ſequel of this Section, how finely he has worked up the hints of diſtreſs, that are ſcattered up and down in Abelard's and Eloiſa's Letters; and, in a little French * hiſtory of their lives and misfortunes. † Abelard was reputed the moſt handſome, as well as moſt learned man, of his time; according to the kind of learning then in vogue. An old chronicle, quoted by

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* Printed at the Hague, 1693.

† He was born at Palais near Nantes in Britanny, at the beginning of the twelfth century, and ſtudied at Paris under William Champeaux.

[*] Andrew du Cheſne informs us, that ſcholars flocked to his lectures from all quarters of the latin world. And his cotemporary St. Bernard relates, that he numbered among his diſciples many principal eccleſiaſtics, and cardinals, at the court of Rome. Abelard himſelf boaſts, that when he retired into the country, he was followed by ſuch immenſe crowds of ſcholars, that they could get neither lodgings nor proviſions ſufficient for them; "ut nec locus hoſpitiis, nec terra ſufficeret alimentis [†]." He met with the fate of many learned men, to be embroiled in controverſy, and accuſed of hereſy; for

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[*] In Hiſ, Cal. Abel, p. 1155. And the high opinion that was held of his learning, may appear from his epitaph by Pet. de Clugny.

> Gallorum Socrates, Plato maximus Heſperiarum,
> Noſter Ariſtoteles, Logicis, quicunque fuerunt,
> Aut par, aut melior, ſtudiorum cognitus orbi
> Princeps, ingenio varius, ſubtilis & acer;
> Omnia vi ſuperans rationis & arte loquendi,
> Abælardus erat, &c.——

Vid, Abæl, & Heloiſ. Epiſt. p. 235. Edit. Rawlinſon, 1718.

[†] Abelardi Opera, p. 19.

St.* Bernard, whoſe influence and authority was very great, got his opinion of the Trinity condemned, at a council held at Sens, 1140. But the talents of † Abelard were not confined to theology, juriſprudence, philoſophy, and the thorny paths of ſcholaſticiſm: he gave proofs of a lively genius, by many poetical performances; inſomuch, that he was reputed to be the author of the famous Romance of the Roſe;

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* The character of this St. Bernard was ſingular; the preſident Henault thus ſpeaks of him. "Il avoit été donné à cet homme extraordinaire de dominer les eſprits," one beholds him paſs in a moment from the depth of a deſert to a court, where he never was diſplaced; where he lived without titles, without a public character, enjoying that perſonal weight which is above authority.—Yet no leſs a man of ſanctity, and a man of wit, than a great politician: His ſermons are maſterpieces of ſentiment and energy. Hiſtoire de France: Troſieme Race. p. 145.

† One is ſometimes ſurprized to ſee the honours and veneration formerly paid to men of literature, in compariſon of what they meet with at preſent. "As every human advantage is attended with inconveniencies, the change of men's ideas in this particular, may probably be aſcribed to the invention of PRINTING; which has rendered books ſo common, that even men of ſlender fortunes can have acceſs to them." HUME's Hiſtory of Great Britain, p. 149.

which,

which, however, was indiſputably written by JOHN OF MEUN, a little city on the banks of the Loire, about four leagues from Orleans; which gave occaſion to Marot to exclaim;

De Jean de Meun s'enfle le cours de Loire.

Of this ancient French poet much more will be ſaid, in the courſe of this work, when we come occaſionally to ſpeak of Chaucer: ſuffice it at preſent to obſerve, that he certainly continued and finiſhed the Romance of the Roſe, which * William de Lorris had left imperfect, forty years before. If chronology † did not abſolutely contradict the notion of Abelard's being the Author of this very celebrated piece, yet are there internal arguments ſufficient to confute it. The miſtake ſeems to have flowed, from his hav-

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* Whom Marot praiſes as the Ennius of France,

Notre Ennius Guillaume de Lorris,

He took his name from the town of Lorris where he was born.

† There is undoubted evidence, that it was written an hundred years after Abelard flouriſhed.

ing given Eloiſa the name of Rose, in one of the many ſonnets he addreſſed to her. In this romance, there are many ſevere and ſatirical ſtrokes on the character of Eloiſa, which the pen of * Abelard never would have given. In one paſſage, ſhe is introduced ſpeaking with indecency and obſcenity; in another, all the vices and bad qualities of women are repreſented, as aſſembled together in her alone.

Qui les mœurs féminins ſavoit,
Car tres-tous en ſoi les avoit.

In a very old epiſtle dedicatory, addreſſed to Philip the fourth of France, by this ſame

John

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[*] Eloiſa ſpeaks thus of Abelard's poetry and ſkill alſo in muſic; for he ſung his own verſes. "Duo autem fateor, tibi ſpecialiter inerant, quibus fœminarum quarumlibet animos ſtatim allicere poteras; dictandi videlicet & cantandi gratia. Quæ cæteros minimè philoſophos aſſecutos eſſe novimus. Quibus quidem quaſi ludo quodam laborem exercitii recreans philoſophici, pleraque amatorio metro vel rithmo compoſita reliquiſti carmina, quæ præ nimiâ ſuavitate tam dictaminis, quam cantus, ſæpius frequentata, tuum in ore omnium nomen inceſſanter tenebant; ut etiam illiteratos melodiæ dulcedo tui non ſineret immemores eſſe." Epiſt. i. Heloiſſæ. p. 51.

It is obſervable, that Pope judiciouſly ſoftened and harmonized her name to *Eloiſa* from *Heloiſſa*.

John of Meun, and prefixed to a French tranſlation of Boetius, a very popular book at that time, it appears, that he alſo tranſlated the epiſtles of Abelard to Heloiſa, which were in high vogue at the court. He mentions alſo that he had tranſlated Vegetius, on the Art military, and a book called the Wonders of Ireland; theſe works ſhew us the taſte of the age; his words are; "t' envoye ores* Boece de conſolation, que j' ai tranſlaté en François, jaçoit que bien entendes le Latin †."

It is to be regretted, that we have no exact picture of the perſon and beauty of Eloiſa; Abelard himſelf ſays, that ſhe was, "*facie non infima*;" her extraordinary learning many circumſtances concur to confirm; particularly one, which is, that the nuns of the Paraclete are wont to have the office of Whitſunday read to them in Greek, to perpetuate the memory of her underſtanding that language. The curious may not be diſpleaſed to be informed, that the Paraclete was built in the pariſh of Quincey, upon the little river Arduzon, near Nogent, upon the Seine. A lady, learned as was Eloiſa in that age, who indiſputably underſtood the latin, greek, and hebrew tongues, was a kind of prodigy: her literature, ſays Abelard, * " in toto regno nominatiſſimam fecerat:" and, we may be ſure, more thoroughly attached him to her. Buſſy Rabutin ſpeaks in high terms of commendation, of the purity of Eloiſa's latinity: a judgment worthy a French count! There is a force, but not an elegance in her ſtyle; which is blemiſhed, as might be expected, by many phraſes unknown to the pure ages of the Roman language, and by many Hebraiſms, borrowed from the tranſlation of the bible.

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* Chaucer alſo tranſlated this piece. Boetius was a moſt admired claſſic of that age; indeed he deſerves to be ſo of any.

† This ſentence ſtrongly alſo characteriſes the times.

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* Abel. Opera, p. 10.

I NOW propoſe to paſs through the * EPISTLE, in order to give the reader a view of the various turns and tumults of paſſion, and the different ſentiments with which Eloiſa is agitated: and at the ſame time, to point out what paſſages are borrowed, and how much improved, from the original Letters. From this analyſis, her ſtruggles and conflicts, between duty and pleaſure, between penitence and paſſion, will more amply and ſtrikingly appear.

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* The compliment which Prior paid our author on this EPISTLE, is at once full of elegance and very lively imagery. But lord Bathurſt informs me, that POPE was not pleaſed with it. He addreſſes it to Abelard, and ſays, that POPE has *wove*—

A ſilken web, and ne'er ſhall fade
Its colours; gently has he laid
The mantle o'er thy ſad diſtreſs,
And Venus ſhall the texture bleſs.
He o'er the weeping Nun has drawn,
Such artful folds of ſacred lawn;
That LOVE with equal grief and pride,
Shall ſee the crime he ſtrives to hide,
And ſoftly drawing back the veil,
The god ſhall to his vot'ries tell,
Each conſcious tear, each bluſhing grace,
That deck'd dear Eloiſa's face.

ALMA. p. 101,

SHE begins with declaring, how the peacefulneſs of her ſituation has been diſturbed, by a letter of her lover accidentally falling into her hands. This exordium is beautiful, being worked up with an awakening ſolemnity; ſhe looks about her, and breaks out at once,

[*] In theſe deep ſolitudes and awful cells [†],
Where heavenly-penſive CONTEMPLATION dwells,
And ever-muſing MELANCHOLY reigns;
What means this tumult in a veſtal's veins?
Why rove my thoughts beyond this laſt retreat?
Why feels my heart it's long-forgotten heat?

She then reſolves neither to mention nor to write the name of Abelard; but ſuddenly adds, in a dramatic manner,

——————— The name appears
Already written—waſh it out my tears [‡]!

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[*] V. 1.

[†] "If I was ordered to find out the moſt happy, and the moſt miſerable man in the world, I would look for them in a cloiſter;" ſaid a man of penetration.

[‡] V. 13.

She then addreſſes herſelf to the convent, where ſhe was confined, in fine imagery:

[*] Relentleſs walls! whoſe darkſom round contains
Repentant ſighs, and voluntary pains,
[†] Ye rugged rocks! which holy knees have worn,
Ye grots and caverns ſhagg'd with horrid thorn!
Shrines where their vigils pale-ey'd virgins keep,
And pitying ſaints whoſe ſtatues learn to weep!
Tho' cold like you, unmov'd and ſilent grown,
I have not yet forgot myſelf to ſtone[‡]!

She proceeds to enumerate the effects, which Abelard's relation of their misfortunes has had upon her; yet notwithſtanding what ſhe ſuffers from them, ſhe intreats him ſtill to write.

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[*] V. 18.

[†] This, and ſeveral other circumſtances, in the ſcenery view of the monaſtery, which denote antiquity, may perhaps be a little blamed, on account of their impropriety, when introduced into a place ſo lately founded as was the Paraclete: but are ſo well imagined, and highly painted, that they demand excuſe.

[‡] "Forget thyſelf to marble" is an expreſſion of Milton, as is alſo, "Caverns ſhagg'd with horrid thorn;" and the epithets "pale-eyed, and twilight," are *firſt* uſed in the ſmaller poems of Milton, which POPE had juſt perhaps been reading.

Yet

[*] Yet write, O write me all! that I may join
Griefs to thy griefs, and echo ſighs to thine.

This is from the Letters—"Per ipſum itaque —Chriſtum obſecramus; quatenus ancillulas ipſius & tuas, crebris literis de his, in quibus adhuc fluctuas, naufragiis certificare digneris, ut nos ſaltem quæ tibi ſolæ remanſimus, doloris vel gaudii participes habeas [†]. On the mention of letters, ſhe breaks out into that beautiful account of their uſe, which is finely improved from the latin.

Heaven firſt taught letters for ſome wretch's aid [‡],
Some baniſh'd lover, or ſome captive maid;
They live, they ſpeak, they breathe, what love inſpires,
Warm from the ſoul, and faithful to its fires [§];

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[*] V. 41.

[†] Epiſt. I. Heloiſſ. pag. 46.

[‡] V. 51.

[§] It is to be hoped, that ſome of the fair ſex, of the abilities of Eloiſa, for we have two or three ſuch at preſent in Great Britain, will anſwer the ingenious, but paradoxical philoſopher of Geneva, who has vented many blaſphemies againſt the paſſion of love. "Il faut diſtinguer, ſays he, le MORAL du *phyſique* dans le ſentiment de l'amour. Le *phyſique* eſt

The virgin's wiſh without her fear impart,
Excuſe the bluſh and pour out all the heart.

"De quibuſcunque autem nobis ſcribas, non parvum nobis remedium conferes; hoc ſaltem uno, quod te noſtri memorem eſſe monſtrabis." She then quotes [*] an unneceſſary paſſage of Seneca, and adds, "Si imagines nobis amicorum abſentium jucundæ ſunt, quæ memoriam renovant, & deſiderium abſentiæ falſo atque inani ſolatio levant; quanto jucundiores ſunt literæ, quæ amici abſentis veras notas efferunt [†]?" The origin of Eloiſa's paſſion is, with much art and know-

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eſt ce deſir général qui porte un ſexe à s'unir à l'autre: Le *moral* eſt ce qui détermine ce deſir, & le fixe ſur un ſeul objet, excluſivement; ou qui du moins lui donne pour cet objet préféré un plus grand degré d'énergie. Or il eſt facile de voir que le moral de l'amour eſt un ſentiment factice; né de l'uſage de la ſocieté & célébré par les femmes avec beaucoup d'habilété & de ſoin, pour établir leur empire, & rendre dominant le ſexe qui devroit obéir." DISCOURS ſur l'origine de l'INEGALITE parmi les hommes—Par J. J. Rouſſeau. Amſterdam, 1755. p. 78.

It is not to be wondered at that he who has written a ſatire againſt human ſociety, ſhould ſatirize its greateſt bleſſing.

[*] Epiſt. p. 47.

[†] Ibid.

ledge of human nature, aſcribed to her admiration of her handſome preceptor: this circumſtance is particularly poetical, and even ſublime;

[*] My fancy form'd thee of angelic kind,
Some emanation of th' all-beauteous mind.

[†] How oft, when preſs'd to marriage, have I ſaid,
Curſe on all laws but thoſe which love has made!
Let wealth, let honour wait the wedded dame,
Auguſt her deed and ſacred be her fame;
Before true paſſion all theſe views remove,
Fame, wealth, and honour, what are you to love?

Theſe ſentiments are plainly from the letters, "Nihil unquam, deus ſcit, in te, niſi te requiſivi; te purè non tua concupiſcens. Non matrimonii fœdera, non dotes aliquas expectavi. Et ſi uxoris nomen ſanctius ac validius videtur, dulcius mihi ſemper extitit amicæ vocabulum, aut, ſi non indigneris, concubinæ vel ſcorti[‡].—POPE has added a very injudicious thought,

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[*] V. 61. [†] V. 73.
[‡] Epiſt. i. Heloiſſ. pag. 49.

[*] The jealous God, when we profane his fires.
Thoſe reſtleſs paſſions in revenge inſpires.

And again,

[†] Love free as air, at ſight of human ties,
Spreads his light wings, and in a moment flies.

It is improper for a perſon in the ſituation of Eloiſa to mention Cupid; mythology is here out of its place. The letters alſo furniſhed the next thought:

[‡] Not Cæſar's empreſs would I deign to prove,
No, make me miſtreſs of the man I love.

"DEUM teſtem invoco, ſi me Auguſtus, univerſo preſidens mundo, matrimonii honore dignaretur, totumque mihi orbem confirmaret in perpetuo præſidendum, charius mihi & dignius videretur, tua dici meretrix, quam illius imperatrix [§]." Next ſhe deſcribes their unparalleled happineſs in the full and free enjoyment of their loves; but all at once ſtops ſhort, and exclaims with eagerneſs, as if ſhe at that inſtant ſaw the dreadful ſcene alluded to,

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[*] V. 81. [†] V. 75. [‡] V. 87.

[§] Epiſt. i. Heloiſſ. pag. 50.

[*] Alas how chang'd! what ſudden horrors riſe!
A naked lover, bound and bleeding lies!
Where, where was Eloiſe? her voice, her hand,
Her ponyard had oppos'd the dire command!
Barbarian, ſtay! *that* bloody ſtroke reſtrain,
The crime was common, common be the pain [†].

One

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[*] V. 100.

[†] It was difficult to ſpeak of this cataſtrophe that befel Abelard with any dignity and grace: our poet however has done it. I know not where caſtration is the chief cauſe of diſtreſs, in any other poem, except in a very extraordinary one of Catullus, where Atys, ſtruck with madneſs by Berecynthia, in a fit of enthuſiaſm, inflicts this puniſhment on himſelf. After which he laments his condition in very pathetic ſtrains. The poem has been ſo little remarked on, that I ſhall take the liberty of inſerting the following paſſage in the ſpeech of Atys, which is very dramatic, full of ſpirit, and ſudden changes of paſſion:

Egone a meâ remota hæc ferar in nemora domo?
Patriâ, bonis, amicis, genitoribus abero?
Abero foro, paleſtrâ, ſtadio, gymnaſiis?
Miſer, ah miſer, querendum eſt etiam atque etiam, anime,
Quod enim genus? figura eſt? ego numquid abierim?
Ego mulier?—ego adoleſcens, ego ephebus, ego puer,

Ego

One knows not which moſt to applaud, the lively imagery, the pathetic, or the artful decency, with which this tranſaction is delicately hinted at, in theſe moſt excellent lines: which are the genuine voice of nature and paſſion, and place the object in-

Ego gymnaſii fui flos, ego eram decus olei,
Mihi januæ frequentes, mihi limina tepida;
Mihi floridis corollis redimita domus erat,
Linquendum ubi eſſet orto mihi ſole cubiculum.
Egone deum miniſtra, & Cybeles famula ferar?
Egone mænas, ego mei pars, ego vir ſterilis ero?
Ego viridis algida Idæ nive amicta loca colam?
Ego vitam agam ſub altis Phrygiæ columinibus?
Ubi cerva ſylvicultrix, ubi aper nemorivagus?
Jam jam dolet quod egi, jam, jam quoque pænitet!

The whole poem being of a ſtrain rather ſuperiour to the generality of Roman poeſy, and being alſo ſo much above the tender and elegant genius of Catullus, whoſe name it bears, inclines me to think it a tranſlation from ſome Grecian writer; and perhaps, if the reader will peruſe the whole, it will give him the trueſt notion of an old dithyrambic, of any poem antiquity has left us. The text is in ſome places much corrupted, but enough remains pure and intelligible to place it at the head of latin poetry, how ſtrangely ſoever it has been neglected. It ought to be obſerved, that the ſeventh, eighth, and ninth lines of this quotation, bear a wonderful reſemblance to a fine paſſage in the book of Job, ch. xxix. ver. 6. & ſeq. I ſhall only add, that this is the only complete poem of the kind.

tended to be impreſſed on the reader full in his ſight.

SHE next reminds Abelard of the ſolemnity of her taking the veil, from verſe one hundred and ſix, to one hundred and eighteen, which are highly beautiful, particularly theſe circumſtances attending the rite——

As with *cold* lips I kiſs'd the ſacred veil,
The ſhrines all *trembled*, and the lamps *grew pale!*

Theſe two circumſtances are fancied with equal force and propriety; and this ſuppoſed prognoſtic of the uneaſineſs ſhe would undergo in the monaſtic life, is very affecting. But her paſſion intruded itſelf even in the midſt of this awful act of devotion; the ſtrength of which ſhe repreſents by this particular,

* Yet then, to thoſe dread altars as I drew,
Not on the *Croſs* my eyes were fixt, but *You*.

Here ſhe gives her fondneſs leave to expatiate into many amorous ideas;

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* V. 115.

[*] Still on that breaſt enamour'd let me lie,
Still drink delicious poiſon from thy eye,
Pant on thy lip, and to thy heart be preſt;

And then follows a line exquiſitely paſſionate, and worthy the *ſenſibility* of Sappho or of Eloiſa,

Give all thou *canſt!*—and let me dream the *reſt.*

Suddenly ſhe here checks the torrent of this amorous tranſport—

Ah no—inſtruct me other joys to prize [†],
With other beauties charm my partial eyes.
Full in my view ſet all the bright abode,
And make my ſoul quit Abelard for God.

She puts him in mind of his being the father and founder of the monaſtery, and entreats him to viſit his flock on that account. This topic is taken from the Letters.

From the falſe world in early youth they fled [‡],
By thee to mountains, wilds, and deſarts led;
You rais'd theſe hallow'd walls; the deſart ſmil'd,
And paradiſe was open'd in the wild.

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[*] V. 123.
[†] V. 125.
[‡] V. 129.

" Nihil hic ſuper alienum ædificâſti fundamentum; totum quod hic eſt, tua creatio eſt. Solitudo hæc feris tantum, ſive latronibus vacans, nullam hominum habitationem noverat, nullam domum habuerat. In ipſis cubilibus ferarum, in ipſis latibulis latronum, ubi nec nominari deus ſolet, divinum erexiſti tabernaculum, et ſpiritûs ſancti proprium dedicâſti templum. Nihil ad hoc ædificandum ex regum vel principum opibus intuliſti, cum plurima poſſes & maxima, ut quicquid fieret, tibi ſoli poſſet aſcribi *." Which laſt ſentence is finely improved by POPE; being at once heightened with pathos and poetic imagery; and containing an oblique ſatire on benefactions raiſed by avarice, or extorted by fear.

No weeping orphan ſaw his father's ſtores †
Our ſhrines irradiate or emblaze our floors;
No ſilver ſaints by dying miſers giv'n,
Here brib'd the rage of ill-requited heav'n;
But ſuch plain roofs as piety could raiſe.

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* Epiſt. i. Heloiſſ. p. 46. † V. 135.

No part of this poem, or indeed of any of Pope's productions is ſo truly poetical, and contains ſuch ſtrong painting, as the paſſage to which we are now arrived;—The deſcription of the convent, where Pope's religion certainly aided his fancy. It is impoſſible to read it without being ſtruck with a penſive pleaſure, and a ſacred awe, at the ſolemnity of the ſcene; ſo pictureſque are the epithets.

> In theſe *lone* walls, (their days eternal bound) *
> Theſe *moſs-grown* domes with *ſpiry* turrets crown'd,
> Where *awful* arches make the noonday night,
> And the *dim* windows ſhed a *ſolemn* light;
> Thy eyes diffus'd a reconciling ray.

All the circumſtances that can amuſe and ſooth the mind of a ſolitary, are next enumerated in this expreſſive manner: and the reader that ſhall be diſguſted at the length of the quotation, one might pronounce, has no taſte, either for painting or poetry:

> The darkſome pines that o'er yon rocks reclin'd †
> Wave high, and murmur to the hollow wind,
> The wand'ring ſtreams that ſhine between the hills,
> The grots that echo to the tinkling rills,

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* V. 141. † 154.

The dying gales that pant upon the trees,
The lakes that quiver to the curling breeze;
No more theſe ſcenes my meditation aid,
Or lull to reſt the viſionary maid.

The effect an influence of MELANCHOLY, who is beautifully perſonified, on every object that occurs, and on every part of the convent, cannot be too much applauded, or too often read, as it is founded on nature and experience. That temper of mind caſts a gloom on all things.

But o'er the twilight groves and duſky caves *,
Long-ſounding iles, and intermingled graves,
Black MELANCHOLY ſits, and round her throws
A death-like ſilence, and a dread repoſe;
Her gloomy preſence ſaddens all the ſcene,
Shades every flower, and darkens every green,
Deepens the murmur of the falling floods,
And breathes a browner horror on the woods.

The figurative expreſſions, *throws*, and *breathes*, and *browner* horror, are, I verily believe, ſome of the ſtrongeſt and boldeſt in the Engliſh language. The IMAGE of the

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* V. 163.

Goddeſs MELANCHOLY ſitting over the convent, and as it were expanding her dreadful wings over its whole circuit, and diffuſing her gloom all around it, is truly ſublime, and ſtrongly conceived.

ELOISA proceeds to give an account of the oppoſite ſentiments, that divide and diſturb her ſoul; theſe are hinted in the Letters alſo,

Ah wretch! believ'd the ſpouſe of God in vain*,
Confeſs'd within the ſlave of love and man!
I ought to grieve, but cannot what I ought;
I mourn the lover, not lament the fault,

This however is improved greatly on the original. "Caſtam me prædicant, qui non deprehenderunt hypocritam †."—"Quomodo etiam pænitentia peccatorum dicitur, quantacunque ſit corporis afflictio, ſi mens adhuc ipſam peccandi retinet voluntatem, & priſtinis æſtuat deſideriis ‡?" She then fondly calls on Abelard for aſſiſtance,

O come! O teach me nature to ſubdue §,
Renounce my love, my life, myſelf, and—you!

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[*] V. 190. [†] Epiſt. p. 68. [‡] Ibid. 66. [§] V. 206.

Fill my fond heart with God alone, for he
Alone can rival, can ſucceed to thee!

Fired with this idea of religion, ſhe takes occaſion to dwell on the happineſs of a BLAMELESS veſtal, one who has no ſuch ſin on her conſcience, as ſhe has, to bemoan. The life of ſuch an one is deſcribed at length by ſuch *ſorts* of pleaſure, as none but a ſpotleſs nun can partake of; the climax of her happineſs is finely conducted;

For her the SPOUSE prepares the bridal ring[*],
For her white virgins hymeneals ſing,
For her th' unfading roſe of Eden blooms,
And wings of Seraphs ſhed divine perfumes,
To ſounds of heavenly harps ſhe dies away,
And melts in viſions of eternal day!

What a judicious and poetical uſe hath POPE here made of the opinions of the myſtics and quietiſts: how would Fenelon have been delighted with theſe lines! True poetry, after all, cannot well ſubſiſt, at leaſt is never ſo ſtriking, without a tincture of enthuſiaſm. The ſudden tranſition has a fine effect;

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[*] V. 215.

Far other dreams my erring ſoul employ [*],
Far other raptures of unholy joy.

Which raptures are painted with much ſenſibility, and in very animating colours. "Nec etiam dormienti ſuis illuſionibus parcunt[†]."

Again,

O curſt dear horrors of all-conſcious night [||];
How glowing guilt exalts the keen delight!

This is very forcibly expreſſed. She proceeds to recount a dream; in which I was always heavily diſappointed, becauſe the imagined diſtreſs is ſuch, as might attend the dreams of any perſon whatever [‡].

————Methinks we wand'ring go [§]
Thro' dreary waſtes, and weep each other's woe,
Where round ſome mouldring tow'r pale ivy creeps,
And low-brow'd rocks hang nodding o'er the deeps;
Sudden you mount, you beckon from the ſkies,
Clouds interpoſe, &c.

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[*] V. 323.
[†] V. 123.
[||] V. 129.
[‡] It is partly from Dido's dream.
[§] V. 242.

Theſe are, indiſputably, picturesque lines; but what we want is a VISION of ſome ſuch appropriated, and peculiar diſtreſs, as could be incident to none but Eloiſa; and which ſhould be drawn from, and have reference to, her ſingle ſtory. What diſtinguiſhes Homer and Shakeſpear from all other poets, is, that they do not give their readers GENERAL ideas: every image is the particular and unalienable property of the perſon who uſes it; it is ſuited to no other; it is made for him or her alone. Even Virgil himſelf is not free from this fault; but is frequently general and indiſcriminating, where Homer is minutely circumſtantial. She next compares his ſituation with her own:

> For thee the fates, ſeverely kind, ordain *
> A cool ſuſpenſe from pleaſure and from pain;
> Thy life a long dead calm of fixt repoſe,
> No pulſe that riots, and no blood that glows †.

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* V. 250.

† The four ſimilies that follow, drawn from religion, are admirable.

Here Eloiſa glances with great modeſty and delicacy, at the irreparable misfortune of her mutilated lover, which ſhe always mentions with regret.

A HINT in the Letters has been beautifully heightened, and elevated into exquiſite poetry, in the next paragraph. Eloiſa says only, "Inter ipſa miſſarum ſolemnia, ubi purior eſſe debeat oratio, obſcœna earum voluptatum phantaſmata ita ſibi penitus miſerrimam captivant animam, ut turpitudinibus illis, magis quam orationi, vacem.—Nec ſolum quæ egimus, ſed loca pariter & tempora[*]," &c.—Let us ſee how this has been improved.

What ſcenes appear, where'er I turn my view[†],
The dear ideas where I fly purſue,
Riſe in the grove, before the altar riſe—

Then follows a circumſtance peculiarly tender and proper, as it refers to a particular excellence of Abelard,

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[*] Epiſt. ii. Heloiſſ. pag. 67.

[†] V. 251.

THY VOICE I ſeem in every hymn to hear [*],
With every bead I drop too ſoft a tear.

To which ſucceed that ſublime deſcription of a high maſs, which came from the poet's ſoul, and is very ſtriking.

When from the cenſer clouds of fragrance roll [†],
And ſwelling organs lift the riſing ſoul,
One thought of thee puts all the pomp to flight,
Prieſts, tapers, temples, ſwim before my ſight,
In ſeas of flame my plunging ſoul is drown'd,
While altars blaze, and angels tremble round.

I BELIEVE few perſons have ever been preſent at the celebrating a maſs in a good choir, but have been extremely affected with awe, if not with devotion; which ought to put us on our guard, againſt the inſinuating nature of ſo pompous and alluring a religion as popery. Lord Bolingbroke being one day preſent at this ſolemnity, in the chapel at Verſailles, and ſeeing the archbiſhop of Paris elevate the hoſt, whiſpered his companion the Marquis de * * * * *, "If I were king of France, I would always perform this ceremony myſelf."

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[*] V. 269.

[†] V. 259.

Eloisa now acknowledges the weakneſs of her religious efforts, and gives herſelf up to the prevalence of her paſſion.

> Come, with one glance of thoſe deluding eyes *,
> Blot out each bright idea of the ſkies;
> Take back that grace, that ſorrow, and theſe tears,
> Take back my fruitleſs penitence and pray'rs;
> Snatch me juſt mounting, from the bleſt abode,
> Aſſiſt the fiends, and tear me from my God!

Suddenly, religion ruſhes back on her mind, and ſhe exclaims eagerly,

> No; fly me, fly me! far as pole to pole!— †
> Ah, *come* not, *write* not, *think* not once of me,
> Nor ſhare one pang of all I felt for thee.
> Thy oaths I quit, thy memory reſign,
> Forget, renounce me, hate whate'er was mine.

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* V. 280.

† V. 300.

This change is judicious and moving. And the following invocation to hope, faith, and chriſtian grace, to come and take full poſſeſſion of her ſoul, is ſolemn, and ſuited to the condition of her mind; for it ſeems to be the poet's intention to ſhew the force of religion over paſſion at laſt, and to repreſent her, as a little calm and reſigned to her deſtiny, and way of life. To fix her in which holy temper, the circumſtance that follows may be ſuppoſed to contribute. For ſhe relates an incident to Abelard, which had made a very deep impreſſion on her mind, and cannot fail of making an equal one, on the mind of thoſe readers, who can reliſh true poetry, and ſtrong imagery. The ſcene ſhe paints is awful: ſhe repreſents herſelf lying on a tomb, and thinking ſhe heard ſome[*] ſpirit calling to her in every low wind,—

Here as I watch'd the dying lamps around [†],
From yonder ſhrine I heard a hollow ſound,
Come, ſiſter, come, (it ſaid, or ſeem'd to ſay)
The place is here, ſad ſiſter, come away!

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[*] V. 303.

[†] Virgil may however have given the hint.—Hinc exaudiri voces, & verba vocantis viſa viri—L. iv. 460.

Once like thyſelf I trembled, wept and pray'd [*],
Love's victim then, but now a ſainted maid.

This ſcene would make a fine ſubject for the pencil; and is worthy a capital painter. He might place Eloiſa in the long ile of a great Gothic church; a lamp ſhould hang over her head, whoſe dim and diſmal ray ſhould afford only light enough to make darkneſs viſible. She herſelf ſhould be repreſented in the *inſtant*, when ſhe firſt hears this aerial voice, and in the attitude of *ſtarting round* with aſtoniſhment and fear. And this was the method a very great maſter took, *to paint a ſound*, if I may be allowed the expreſſion. This ſubject was the baptiſm of Jeſus Chriſt; and, in order to bring into the piece the remarkable incident of the voice from heaven, which cried aloud, "This is my beloved ſon," he repreſented all the aſſembly that attended on the banks of Jordan, gazing up into heaven, with the utmoſt ardor of amazement.

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[*] It is well contrived, that this inviſible ſpeaker ſhould be a perſon that had been under the very ſame kind of misfortunes with Eloiſa.

At this call of a ſiſter in misfortune, who had been viſited with a ſad ſimilitude of griefs with her own, Eloiſa breaks out in a religious tranſport,

> I come, I come! prepare your roſeate bow'rs,
> Cœleſtial palms, and ever-blooming flow'rs;
> Thither where *ſinners* may have reſt I go!

She then calls on Abelard, to pay her the laſt ſad offices; and to be preſent with her in the article of death,

> See my lips tremble, and my eyeballs roll—

And then a circumſtance of perſonal fondneſs intervenes,

> *Suck* my laſt breath, and catch the flying ſoul!

But ſhe inſtantly corrects herſelf, and would have her Abelard attend her at theſe laſt ſolemn moments, only as a devout prieſt, and not as a fond lover. The image, in which ſhe repreſents him coming to adminiſter extreme unction, is ſtriking and pictureſque;

> Ah, no—in ſacred veſtments mayſt thou ſtand,
> The hallow'd taper * *trembling* in thy hand,

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* The words printed in Italics ought to be looked on as particularly beautiful.

> *Preſent* the croſs before my *lifted* eye,
> Teach me at once, and learn of me, to die!

She adds, that it will be *ſome* conſolation to behold him once more, tho' even in the agonies of death,

> Ah then! thy once-lov'd Eloiſa ſee!
> It will be *then* no crime to *gaze* on me!

Which laſt line I could never read without great emotion; it is at once ſo pathetic, and ſo artfully points back to the whole train and nature of their misfortunes. The circumſtances, ſhe wiſhes may attend the death of Abelard, are poetically imagined, and are alſo agreeable to the notions of myſtic devotion. The death of St. Jerome is finely painted by DOMENICHINO, with ſuch attendant particulars.

> In trance ecſtatic may thy pangs be drown'd †,
> Bright clouds deſcend, and angels watch thee round,
> From opening ſkies may ſtreaming glories ſhine,
> And ſaints embrace thee with a love like mine.
> May one kind grave unite each hapleſs name,
> And graft my love immortal on thy fame!

This wiſh was fulfilled. The body of Abelard, who died twenty years before Eloiſa, was ſent to Eloiſa, who interred it in the monaſtery of the Paraclete, and it was accompanied with a very extraordinary form of Abſolution, from the famous Peter de Clugny; "Ego Petrus Cluniacenſis abbas, qui Petrum Abelardum in monachum Cluniacenſem recepi, & corpus ejus furtim delatum Heloiſſæ Abbatiſſæ, & monialibus Paracleti conceſſi, auctoritate omnipotentis Dei, & omnium ſanctorum, abſolvo eum, pro officio, ab omnibus peccatis ſuis*."—"Eloiſa herſelf," ſays †Vigneul Marville, ſollicited for this abſolution, and Peter de Clugny willingly granted it; on what it could be founded, I leave to our learned theologiſts to determine. In certain ages, opinions have prevailed, for which no ſolid reaſon can be given." When Eloiſa died in 1163, ſhe was interred by the ſide of her beloved huſband: I muſt not forget to mention, for the ſake of thoſe who are fond of modern miracles, that when ſhe was put into the grave, Abelard ſtretched out his arms to receive her, and cloſely embraced her.

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† V. 340.

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[*] Epiſt. Abæl. & Heloiſſ. p. 238.

[†] Melanges, T. ii. p. 55.

Eloisa, at the concluſion of the epistle to which we are now arriv'd, is judiciouſly repreſented as gradually ſettling into a tranquility of mind, and ſeemingly reconciled to her fate. She can bear to ſpeak of their being buried together, without violent emotions. Two lovers are introduced as viſiting their celebrated tombs, and the behaviour of theſe ſtrangers is finely imagined:

> If ever chance two wand'ring lovers brings,
> To Paraclete's white walls and ſilver ſprings;
> O'er the pale marble ſhall they join their heads,
> And drink the falling tears each other ſheds;
> Then ſadly ſay, with mutual pity mov'd,
> Oh! may we never love as theſe have lov'd!

The poet adds, ſtill farther, what impreſſions a view of their ſepulchre would make even on a ſpectator leſs intereſted than theſe two lovers; and how it could affect his mind, even in the midſt of the moſt ſolemn acts of religion;

> From the full quire when loud Hoſannas riſe *,
> And ſwell the pomp of *dreadful* ſacrifice,
> Amid that ſcene, if ſome relenting eye,
> Glance on the ſtone where our cold relics lie,
> Devotion's ſelf ſhall ſteal a thought from heav'n,
> One human tear ſhall drop—and be forgiven!

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* V. 353.

WITH this laſt line, at firſt it appears, that the poem ſhould have ended; for the eight additional verſes *, concerning ſome poet, that haply might ariſe to ſing their misfortune, are languid and flat, and diminiſh the pathos of the foregoing ſentiments. They might ſtand it ſhould ſeem for the concluſion of almoſt any ſtory, were we not informed, that they were added by the Poet in alluſion to his own caſe, and the ſtate of his own mind. For I am well informed, that what determined him in the choice of the ſubject of this epiſtle, was the retreat of that lady into a nunnery, whoſe death he had lately ſo pathetically lamented, in a foregoing Elegy, and for whom he had conceived a violent paſſion. She was firſt beloved by a nobleman †, an intimate friend of POPE, and, on his deſerting her, retired into France; when before

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* And ſure if fate ſome future bard ſhall join
In ſad ſimilitude of grief to mine,
Condemn'd *whole years* in *abſence* to deplore,
And *image* charms he muſt behold no more;
Such if there be, who loves ſo long, ſo well;
Let him our ſad, our tender ſtory tell!
The well ſung woes will ſooth my penſive ghoſt;
He beſt can *paint* 'em, who can *feel* 'em moſt.

† The duke of Buckingham—Sheffield.

before ſhe had made her laſt vows in the convent, to which ſhe had retreated, ſhe put an end to her unfortunate life. The recollection of this circumſtance will add a beauty and a pathos to many paſſages in the poem, and will confirm the doctrine * delivered above, concerning the choice of ſubject.

THIS EPISTLE, is, on the whole, one of the moſt highly finiſhed, and certainly the moſt intereſting, of the pieces of our author; and, together with the ELEGY to the Memory of an Unfortunate Lady, is the only inſtance of the Pathetic POPE has given us. I think one may venture to remark, that the reputation of POPE, as a poet, among poſterity, will be principally owing to his WINDSOR-FOREST, his RAPE OF THE LOCK, and his ELOISA TO ABELARD; whilſt the facts and characters alluded to and expoſed, in his later writings, will be forgotten and unknown, and their poignancy and propriety little reliſhed. For WIT and SATIRE are tranſitory and periſhable, but NATURE and PASSION are eternal.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.